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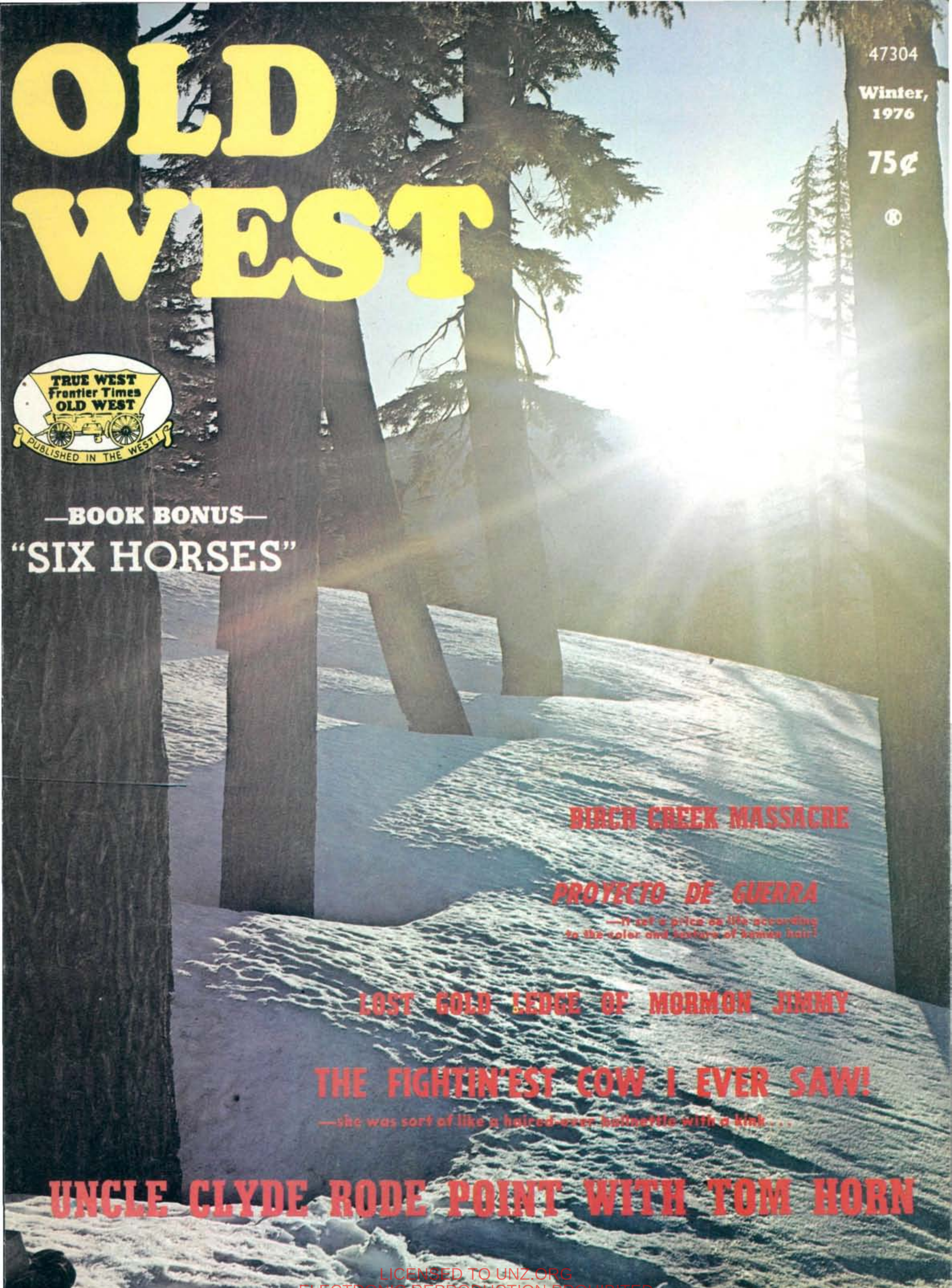

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—she was sort of like a haired-over bullnettle with a kink . . .

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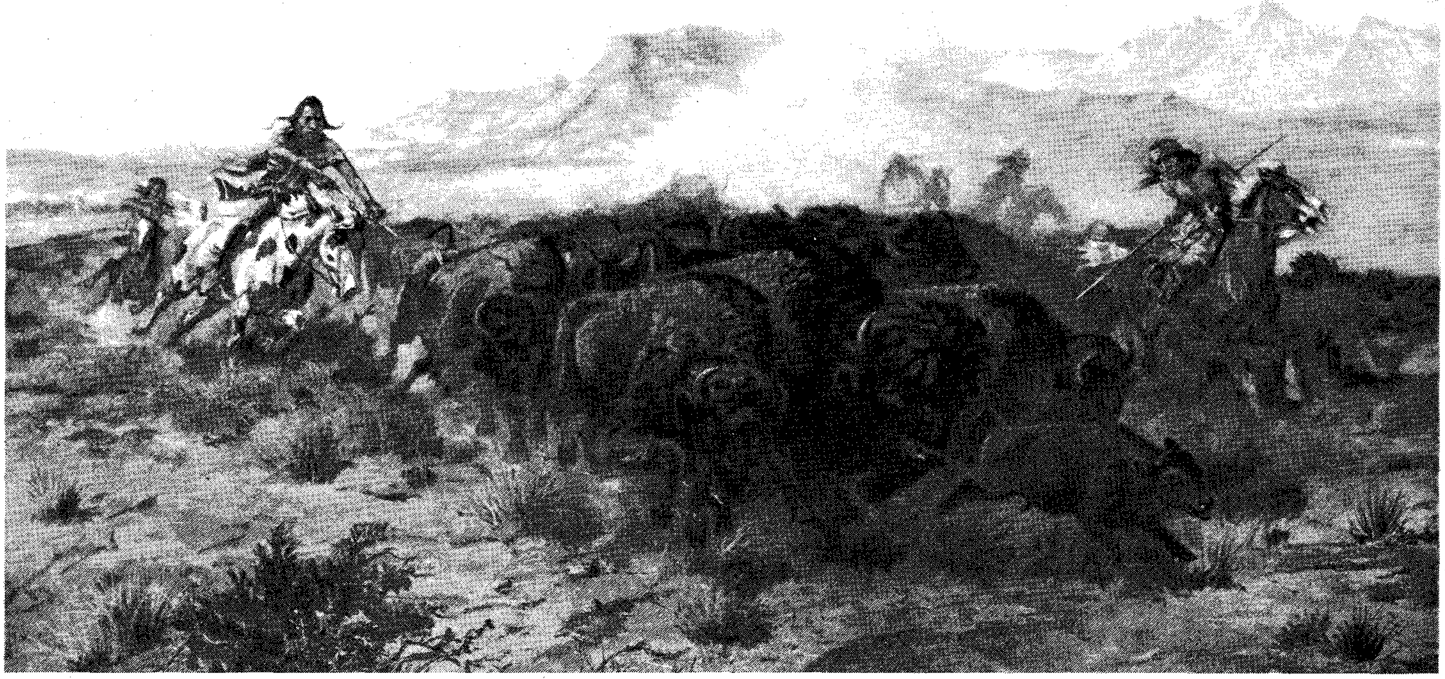
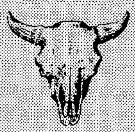
This is #101, "The Buffalo Hunt."



CHOOSE FROM SELECTIONS BELOW. LIST NUMBERS ON A SHEET OF PAPER.

PICTURE SIZE IS WIDTH BY DEPTH



1—Ambushed, 11x14
2—A Tight Dally & Loose Latigo, 13½x9½
3—A Loose Cinch, 11x8
4—A Wounded Grizzly, 8½x11
5—Buffalo Hunt (spears), 11x7½
6—Boss of the Trail Herd, 8x10½
7—Bronc to Breakfast, 15x8½
8—Blackfeet Burning Crow Buffalo Range, 11½x8
9—Bucking Bronco, 8x11½
10—Better Than Bacon, 11x8½
11—On the Move, 13½x9½
12—Buffalo Hunt (arrows), 12½x8½
13—On the Trail, 11x7½
14—The Pony Raid, 10½x8
15—At Close Quarters, 11x8½
16—Capturing the Grizzly, 15x8½
17—Cinch Ring, 15x8½
18—Caught with the Goods, 14x9½
19—Cowboy Life, 10x14
20—Call of the Law, 13½x9½
21—Carson's Men, 14x9½
22—Return of the Warriors, 13½x9½
23—Piegan Indian, 9x12
24—Renegades Return, 16x11½
25—Chief Joseph, 8x11
26—Deadline on the Range, 14x9½
27—Disputed Trail, 11x14
28—Dangerous Cripple, 14x9½
29—In The Wake of The Buffalo Runners, 10x8
30—Early American, 13½x9½
31—Elk in Lake McDonald, 11x8½
32—First Furrow, 8x12
33—First Wagon Tracks, 15x8½
34—Finding the Trail, 13½x9½
35—Heads or Tails, 15x8½
36—Heading the Right Way, 13½x9½
37—The Cattle Drive, 13½x9½
38—Women of the Plains, 8x6
39—Invocation To The Sun, 13½x9½
40—Indian Love Call, 13½x9½
41—Jerked Down, 15x8½
42—The Jerkline, 14x9½
43—Loops & Swift Horses Are Surer Than Lead, 10½x7
44—Last of the Herd, 15x8½
45—Last Chance or Bust, 12½x9
46—Mad Cow, 12x8
47—Wagons Westward, 13½x9½
48—The Challenge, 10½x6½
49—When Arrows Spell Death, 9x7
50—Old Fashioned Stage Coach, 10x7
51—At the End of the Rope, 10½x7
52—Prospectors, 10½x8
53—Planning the Attack, 14x10
54—Pipe of Peace, 14x7
55—Who Killed the Bear?, 10½x7
56—Queen's War Hounds, 14x9½
57—Rainy Morning in a Cow Camp, 11x8½
58—Roping a Grizzly, 11x8½
59—Red Man's Wireless, 14x7
60—Roping a Wolf, 11x8½
61—Smoking Them Out, 11x10
62—Scattering the Riders, 11½x8
63—Strenuous Life, 14x10
64—Sun Worshippers, 16x10½
65—Serious Predicament, 15x8½
66—Single Handed, 14x9½
67—Slick Ear, 14x11½
68—Smoke of a .45, 12x9
69—Sage Brush Sport, 13½x8½
70—Signal Fire, 11x14
71—When Red Man Talks War, 13½x9½
72—In Enemy Country, 13½x9½
73—The Medicine Man, 11x8½
74—Trail's End, 13½x9½
75—The Holdup, 13x8
76—The Bolter, 9½x13½
77—The Attack, 12x8
78—The Drifter, 10½x8
79—The Tenderfoot, 11x8
80—Two of a Kind Win, 13½x9½
81—Last of 5,000, 8x9½
82—When Tracks Spell Meat, 13½x9½
83—When the Nose of a Horse Beats the Eyes of a Man, 13½x9½
84—When Ignorance is Bliss, 11x14
85—Wild Horse Hunters (cowboys), 14x9
86—Wild Horse Hunters (Indians), 12½x8
87—Whose Meat?, 13½x9½
88—Wagon Boss, 16x9½
89—When Mules Wear Diamonds, 13½x9½
90—A Crow Chief, 7x9
91—Innocent Allies, 14x9½
92—Where Ignorance is Bliss, 10½x6 (Cartoon)
93—When Sioux & Blackfeet Meet, 15x8½
94—Warning Shadows, 10½x7
95—When Horse Flesh Comes High, 15x8½
96—Wound Up, 11x8½
97—The Scouts (Indians) 9½x7
98—Winter Packet, 15x7
99—Mourning Her Warrior Dead, 11x8½
100—When Horses Turn Back There's Danger Ahead, 14x9½
101—The Buffalo Hunt (1898), 13½x9½
102—Cowboy Sport, 13½x9½
103—A Desperate Stand, 13½x9½
104—Rider of the Rough String, 13½x9½
105—Prairie Express, 13½x9½
106—The Fire Boat, 10½x8
107—Our Warriors Return, 13½x9½
108—When Wagon Trails Were Dim, 13½x9½
109—In Without Knocking, 14x10
110—Critical Moment, 8x6
111—Land of Good Hunting, 10½x8
112—Meat's Not Meat Until It's In The Pan, 13½x9½

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WESTERN BOOK ROUNDUP

By The Old Bookaroos

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A DIFFERENT TEXAS HISTORY

Mark E. Nackman's *A Nation Within A Nation* (Kennikat Press Corp. 90 S. Bayles, Port Washington, N. Y. 11050; $12.50) examines the political history of Texas from 1821 to 1861. We tend to associate Texas history with heralded great men such as Sam Houston, Thomas Rusk, Stephen Austin, Mirabeau Lamar and the martyred heroes of the Alamo. While Nackman gives praise to this group of patriots, he points out that the original Texas was a lawless no-man's-land where criminals and outlaws from other states found refuge and became the ancestors of a growing population. They were a fiery-tempered breed who capably won Texas freedom from a treacherous Mexican Army. There is a descriptive chapter on the short life and nearly bankrupt Texas nation vulnerable to another stab in the back by Mexico. Annexation to the United States helped stabilize Texas fears about subsequent Mexican invasions, but this was not a simple and obvious solution. This subject has been well developed by the author. Nackman ends his book with a chapter on the nervous raids by Cortina's guerrillas in the Rio Grande Valley where Tex-Mexicans still consider themselves Tejanos and not Americans or Mexicans. The book will be a valuable reference for students of both Texas history and political drama.

EXPLORING ALASKA COASTS

William R. Hunt, professor of history at the University of Alaska, has written an impressive, scholarly book, *Arctic Passage* (Charles Scribner's Sons, $12.95). The mysterious area extending from Alaska along the 2,000 mile Aleutian Island chain to Kamchatka, Russia and north to the Bering Sea was better known to fishermen, whalers and seal hunters than the coast of California in the 1800s. Czar Nicolas ordered Vitus Bering of Swedish descent to head an overland party to cross Siberia, build ships in Kamchatka harbor and explore north of the Aleutians and into the Bering Sea. He wanted a map and a shipping lane charted to learn where Siberia and America met or joined. Bering's party endured hardship and losses of men and horses. Their newly-made boats froze fast in the harbor ice. Most of the men survived the below zero temperatures but their 200 horses either froze or starved to death. Bering and many sea captains suffered from frostbite, crazy seas, fog, hunger, thirst and the inevitable scurvy. Savage sea battles which killed many crewmen were common and wearied the sailors and chilled morale. By 1866, Russia's dwindling interest in the fur trade and need of money for the national treasury caused the leaders to offer Alaska for sale. U. S. Secretary of State Seward bought Alaska for $7,000,000 on March 30, 1867. The author covers the Alaska Gold Rush and such rakish fight promoters as Wyatt Earp, Tex Rickard, Doc Kearnes, Wilson Mizner and Mike Mahoney. The book concludes with a chapter on modern Alaska, an era

(Continued on page 44)

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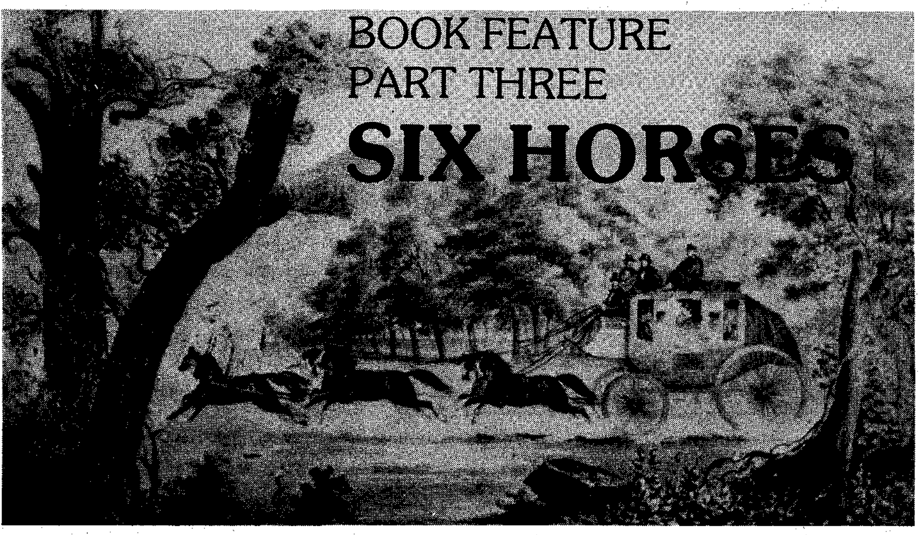

California Stage Co.

WINTER, 1976 VOL. 13, NO. 2 WHOLE NO. 50

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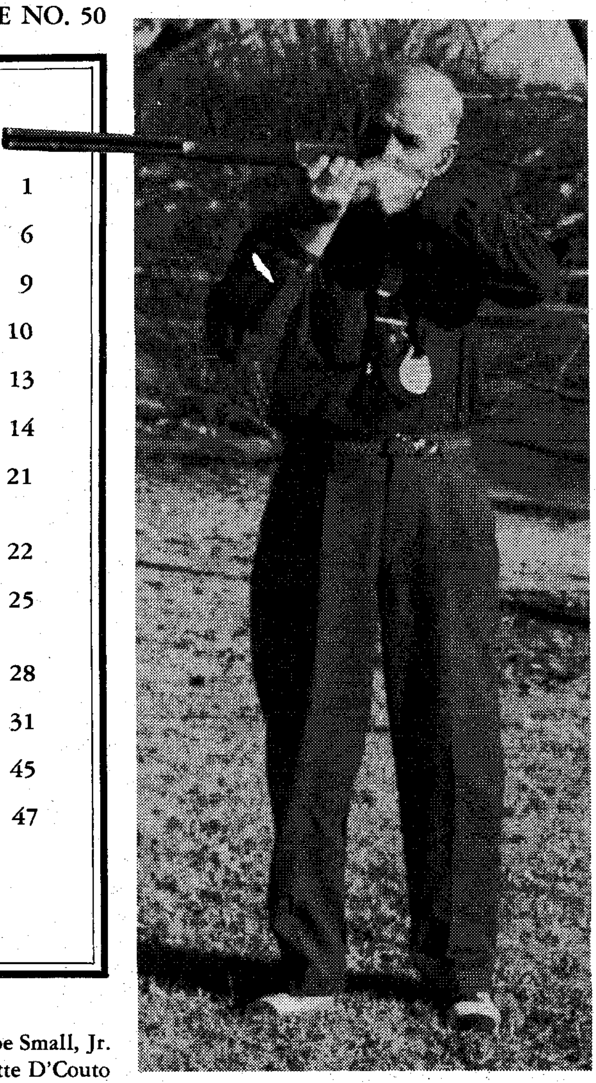
"Sunrise in the Oregon Cascades"



Earl Packer's left-handed aim.

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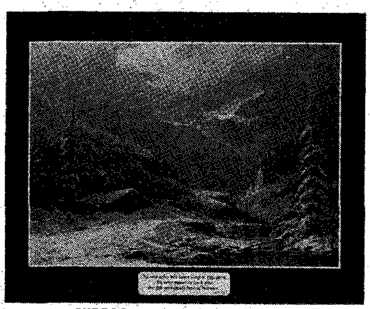
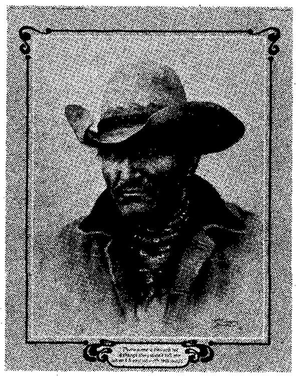
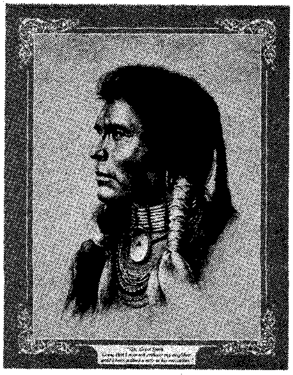
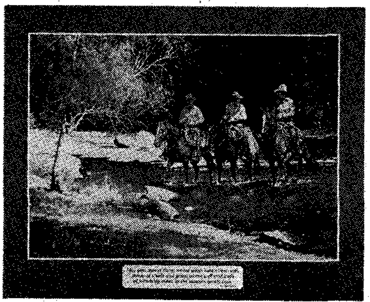
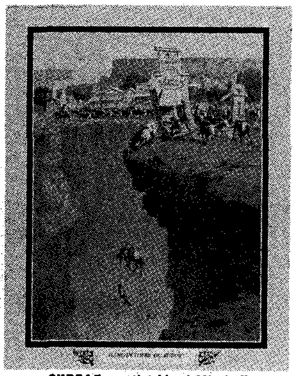
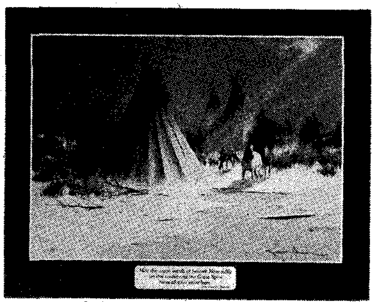

SKP532 - artist Wayne Lowdermilk
To one who has been long in city pent,
'tis very sweet to look into
the fair and open face of heaven...

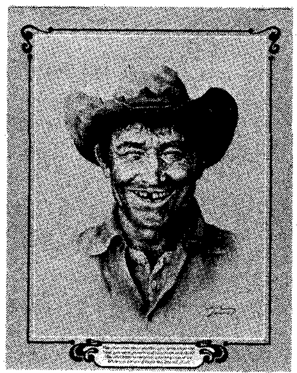

SKP504 - artist Bill Hampton
"There were a helluva lot
of things they didn't tell me
when I hired on with this outfit."

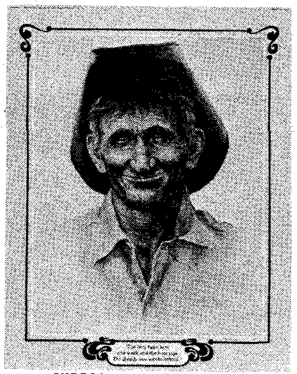

SKP519 - artist Bill Hampton
"Oh, Great Spirit,
Grant that I may not criticize my neighbor
until I have walked a mile in his moccasins."

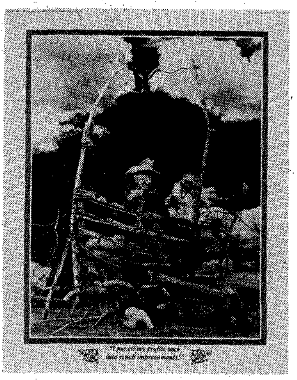

SKP529 - artist Melvin C. Warren
May you always camp where water runs sweet, with
plenty of shade and grass, where well trod trails
of friendship meet, as the seasons gently pass.

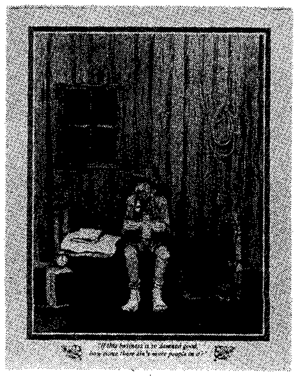

SKP515 - artist Lloyd Mitchell
HANG IN THERE, OL' BUDDY!


SKP531 - artist Robert Wagoner
May the warm winds of heaven blow softly
on this house and the Great Spirit
bless all who enter here.


SKP502 - artist Bill Hampton
May your horse never stumble, your spurs never rust,
Your guts never grumble and your cinch never bust!
May your boots never pinch, your crops never fail,
While you eat lots of beans and stay out of jail!


SKP521 - artist Bill Hampton
"I've only been here
one week and the boss says
I'm already two weeks behind."


SKP526 - artist Gene Zesch
"I put all my profits
back into ranch improvements!"


SKP525 - artist Gene Zesch
"If this business is so damned good,
how come there ain't more people in it?"

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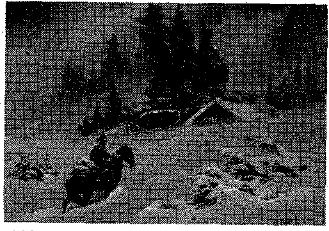
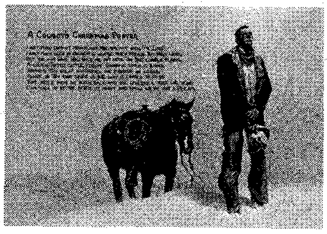
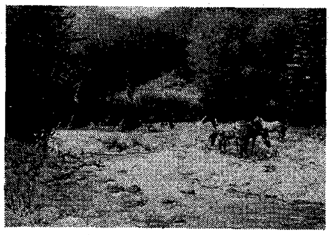


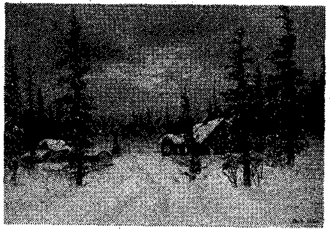
1338 May Christmas bring Friends to your Fireside... And Good Health throughout the New Year


A Cowboy's Christmas Prayer

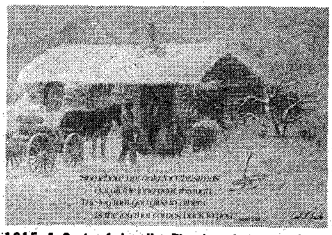
1316 A Cowboy's Christmas Prayer-May the Peace and Good Will of Christmas always be with you



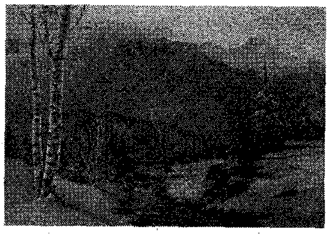
1360 "May the...sun shine warmly upon you, etc." -May the Great Spirit bring you Peace...at Christmas



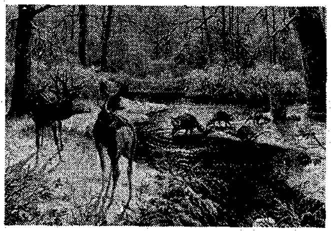
1367 ...May your blessings be more, Than you've ever hoped for, And your Christmas a *warmth, etc.*



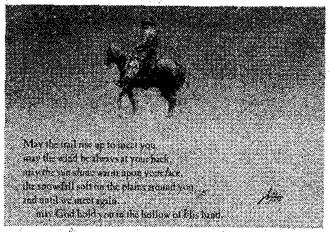
1215 A Sack of Joy "...The joy that you give to others, etc."-Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



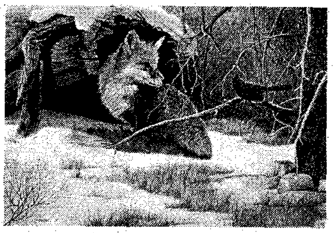
1377 "The air up there...is very pure and fine...It is the same the angels breathe."-Merry Christmas



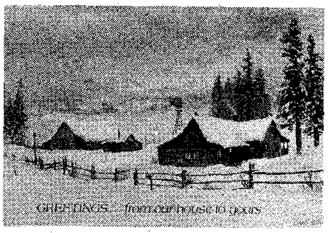
3051 "...silver day is drifting into magic--Christmas night."-May the magic of Christmas be yours


May the trail rise up to meet you
may the wind be always at your back,
may the sun shine warm upon your face,
the snowfall soft on the plains around you
and until we meet again...
may God hold you in the hollow of His hand.

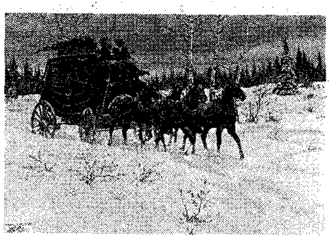
1304 "May the trail rise up to meet you, etc." *-Merry Christmas and...a Happy New Year*



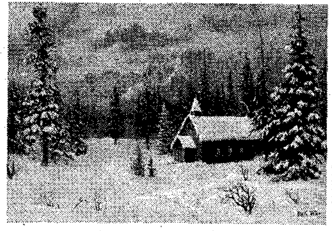
3064 "...the small wonders of the season, etc." -Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year


GREETINGS... from our house to yours

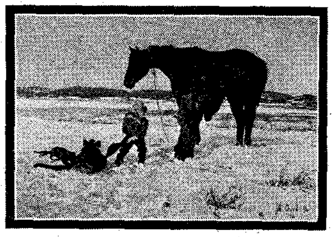
1139 "...We send this card instead of a letter and *hope you're doin' as good, etc."* *-Merry Christmas*



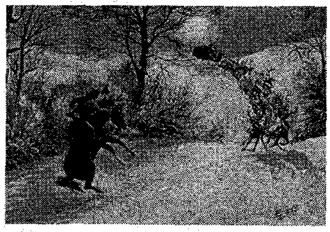
1328 Christmas Trail-...What could be better...Than to wish Merry Christmas to all that we know!



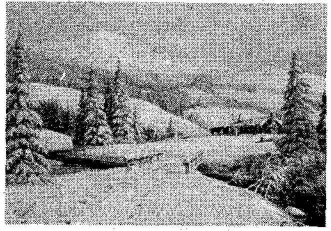
1373 "This is the day the Lord hath made, etc." -May the Christmas Spirit remain...through the Year



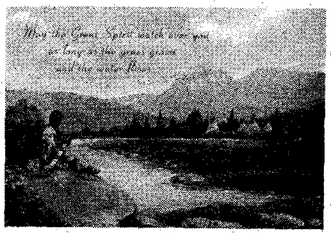
1329 "To have joy one must share it, etc."-Wishing you a Christmas Season *filled* with...Happiness



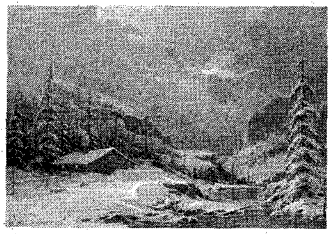
1230 Surprise on the Trail-To wish you a Merry Christmas and a New Year chuck full of Happiness



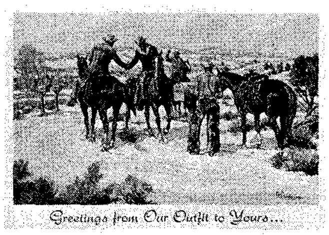
1315 A Good Day for Visiting-May the Spirit of Christmas Abide with you through the Coming Year



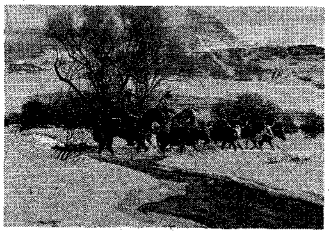
1158 "May the Great Spirit watch over you, etc." -Merry Christmas and Happy New Year



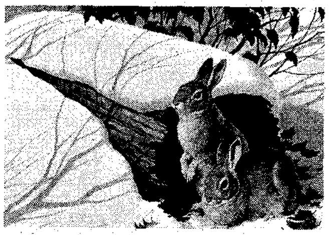
1151 "...the fair, And open face of heaven,..." -May every happiness be yours at Christmas, etc.


Greetings from Our Outfit to Yours...

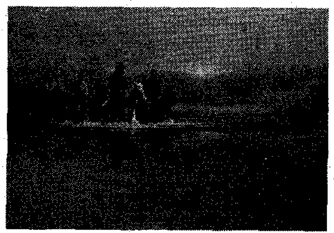
1345 "Greetings..."-With Best Wishes at Christmas and Happiness through all the Coming Year



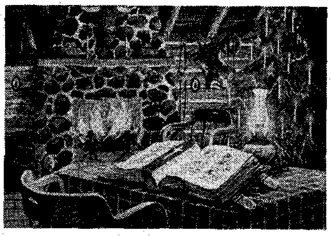
1342 After the Storm-May the meaning of the Season be deeper...As Christmas comes...this year



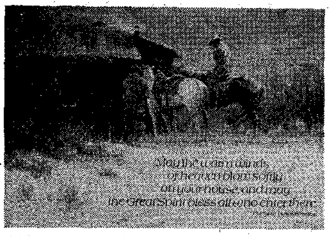
3035 "To have joy one must share it, etc."-Wishing you a Christmas Season filled with Love and Happiness



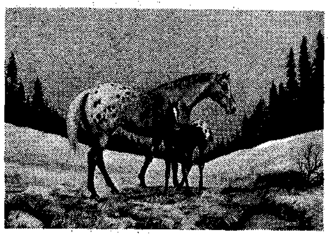
1337 "There is a destiny that makes us brothers, etc."-Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



1205 A *Memory of Christmas*-...*May you have a* Merry Christmas in the good old-fashioned way!



1216 *"...may the Great Spirit bless all, etc."* *-With* Best Wishes for Christmas and all the New Year



1320 Appaloosa Mother-May you have the Spirit of Christmas which is Peace...the Heart...which is Love

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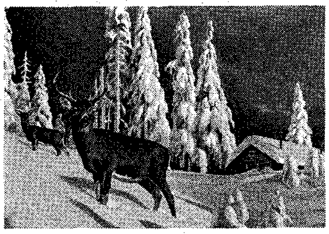
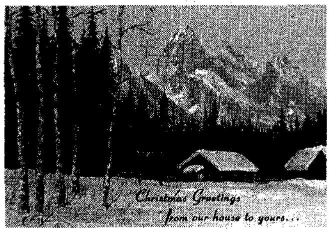
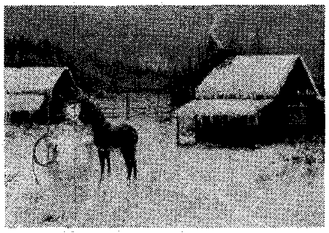


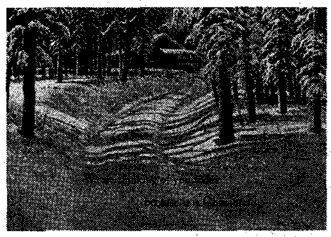
3040 "...face to face with creatures sublime, etc." - Merry Christmas and Happy New Year


Christmas Greetings
from our house to yours...

1370 The folks at our place all join in to say "May all the folks at your place have a Happy Holiday"

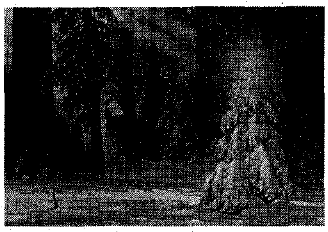


1319 "...I'll wish for the snowman's nose."-A Season of Joy to you, dear friends, etc.

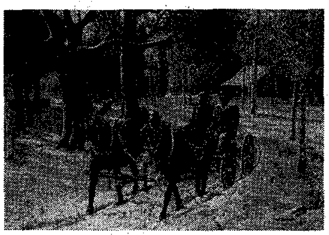


1364 "We are thinking of you..."-...good will to you is what we mean in...The Spirit of Christmas

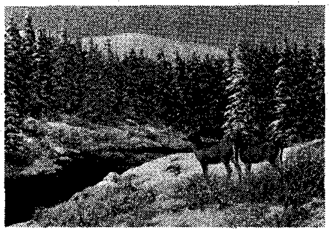
1332 ...here's the proof our hearts can holler 'Merry Christmas'--for less than a dollar!



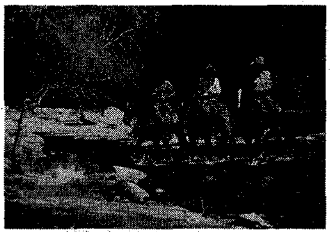
1749 "God, the Artist" Famous poem inside-Wishing you a Blessed Christmas and Happiness, etc.



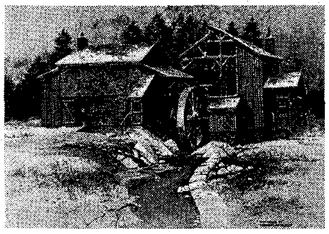
1334 "To those we love and...all good friends, etc."-Merry Christmas from the two of us!



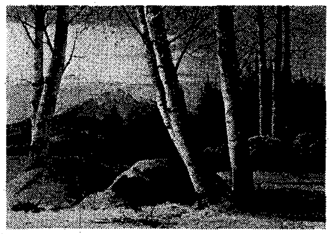
3072 "Take Time to See" Famous nature poem inside-Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



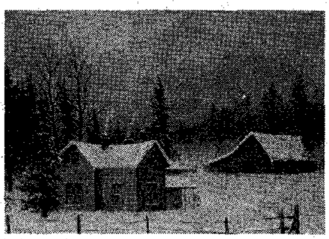
1323 "May you always camp Where the water runs sweet, etc."-Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



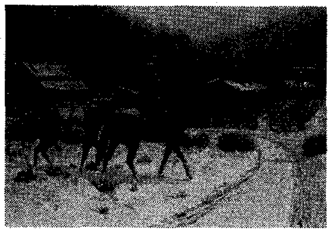
1374 May there come to you at this holiday time ...Health, Happiness and Enduring Friendships



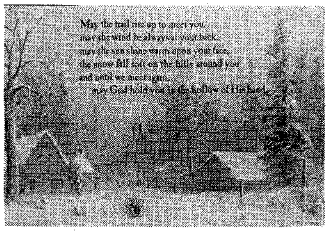
1375 "I come to my solitary woodland walk, etc." -With Best Wishes for Christmas and all the New Year



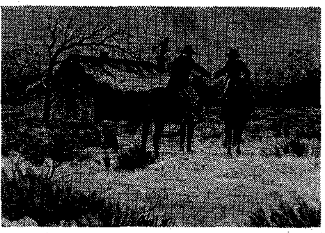
1335 ...God bless and keep you, and...May you have a Merry Christmas in the old-fashioned way!



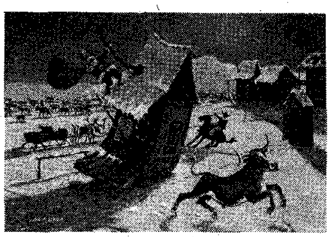
1331 "In every home, in every heart the lights of friendship glow, etc."-MERRY CHRISTMAS


May the trail rise up to meet you,
may the wind be always at your back,
may the sun shine warm upon your face,
the snow fall soft on the hills around you
and until we meet again,
may God hold you in the hollow of His hand.

1234 "May the trail rise up to meet you, etc.-Merry Christmas and Best Wishes for a Happy New Year



1137 Britches patched...Ol' cow gone dry. Both horses lame, But Merry Christmas just the same!



1146 ...wishing you a rootin' tootin' Christmas and lots of happy times in the New Year to come.

Christmas is the time to touch across the miles

HOW TO ORDER: Use coupon or letter and mail with payment. Order all of one card design or as many of each as desired. Indicate envelope color choice of red, blue or white. Only one envelope color choice per order. Include fee for postage and handling in total payment. Colorado residents add 3% sales tax. California residents add 6% use tax. Canadian customs duty charged at border. No C.O.D.'s, please. Thank you.

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NAME AND BRAND	6.45	9.00	11.75	14.50	19.75	24.50	29.25	34.00	43.50	62.50	100.50
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1146	1304	1331	1360	1749
1151	1315	1332	1364	3035
1158	1316	1334	1367	3040
1205	1319	1335	1370	3051
1215	1320	1337	1373	3064
1216	1323	1338	1374	3072

RED ☐ **BLUE** ☐ **WHITE** ☐ **Total Cards Ordered** ____ **Total Payment Enclosed** ____

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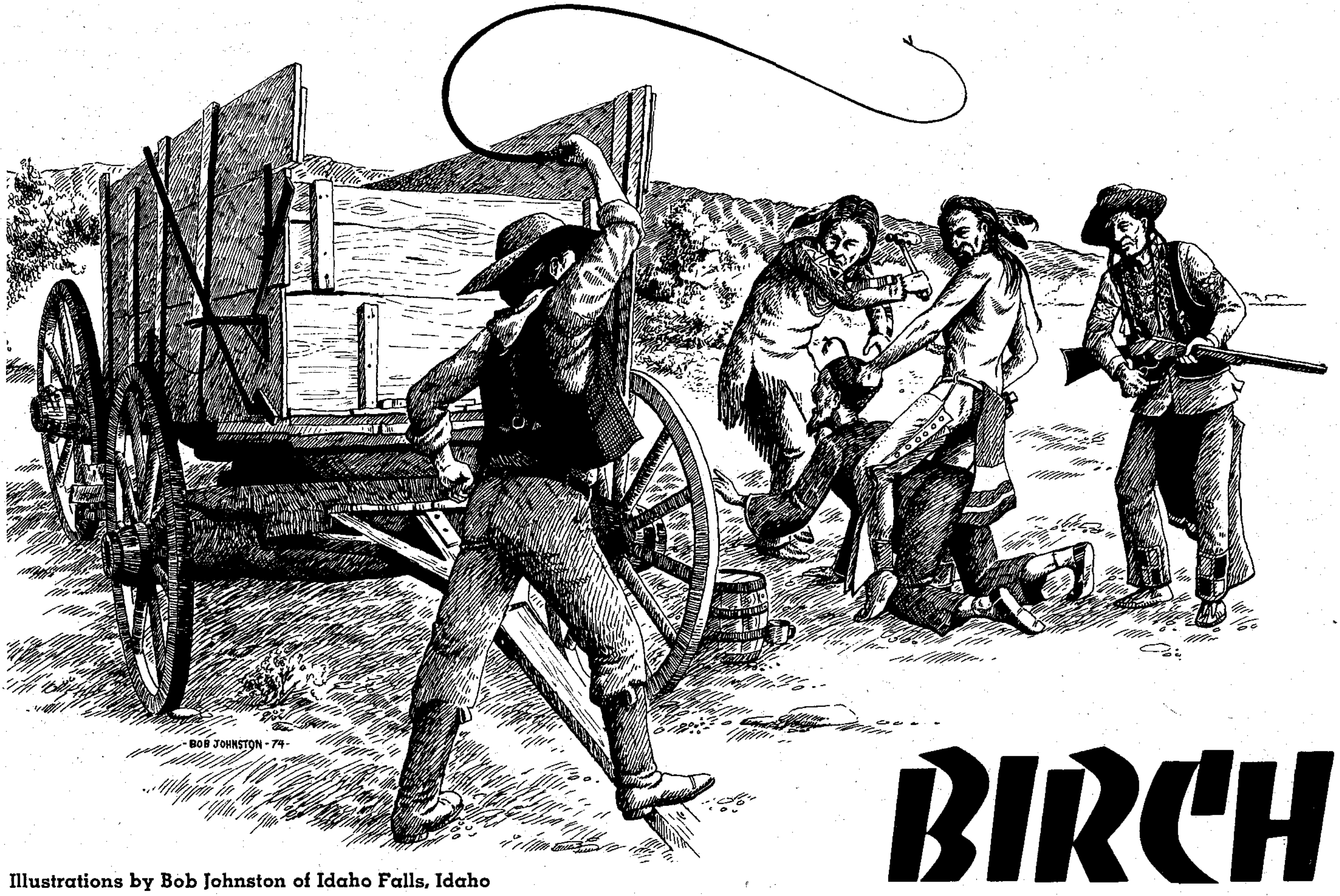


Jim Hayden's whip cracked over the heads of the Indians, demanding release of the terrified Chinamen.

Illustrations by Bob Johnston of Idaho Falls, Idaho

BIRCH

BY ETHEL KIMBALL

"SMOKE TALK!" whispered the blacksmith as he squinted up at the mountains surrounding the new little town of Salmon City in Idaho Territory. An old remembered fear tightened his weathered face as he added, "Them Injuns is gittin' close."

And close they were. By day their ghostly messages threaded skyward from the high peaks of the Great Divide separating Lemhi County from what is now Montana. Mingling with the dancing heat waves of the hot, dry days of that late July in 1877, answers or relays followed from the Salmon River Mountains and the Lemhi Range, combining to encircle the valleys being claimed by settlers. By night the signals crept closer, suddenly bursting into flames on nearby foothills, flashing visible codes to invisible redmen. Each morning white men would ride up the slopes; each morning they found only a few tracks of unshod horses and moccasined men. And the grey ashes of a fire gone dead.

Tension had been building in this isolated mountain country ever since early spring when Nez Perce Indian trouble had begun along the northwest border of the Territory. The unrest was first noticed by the Shoshoni, Sheepeater and Bannock tribes on an agency reservation along the Lemhi River, about seventeen miles southeast of Salmon City. With their own sources of information, they knew which way the wind would blow the sparks of Nez Perce anger, and the differing sympathies at the agency threatened to split the tribes wide open. For countless generations they had been friends with the Nez Perce, welcoming them as brothers during the frequent trips made by the Nez Perce to fish and hunt in the Shoshoni homeland, and joining together in defense against the constantly aggressive Blackfeet.

Aggravating the discontent was the lack of provisions at the agency, plus the careless disdain shown in the whites' attitude toward them as a whole. Shoshoni Chief Tendoy had long been a friend of white men, but the Bannock element, under the influence of Major Jim and Peg-ee, wanted to join the Nez Perce in fighting all white oppressors. Emissaries from Chief Joseph arrived, pleading for help.

Apprehension began to be felt by the white women of the settlement, planted from seeds of rumor brought by Indian women who did household chores in exchange for "napias"—the white man's money. When it was learned that Chief Joseph was moving his war band eastward, traveling ancient trailways in their direction, there was no longer any doubt that plans for protection must be made.

Pleas sent to the military were denied—the soldiers already had more fighting than they could handle. Requisitions to Governor Brayman of Idaho Territory for ammunition for Springfield needle guns were not granted. The settlers were on their own.

Scared they were; helpless or hopeless they were not. Before long a cottonwood stockade reared its hulk on Main Street and enclosed a new well and a cabin shelter for women and children.

Scout companies were organized, led by men who had been seasoned by the Civil War. Organizing and drilling was also done at Junction, about sixty miles up the Lemhi. That community was very small, since it was but a stage stop on the crossroads to the gold rush town of Bannock, Montana and the railhead at Corinne, Utah—but it was also located on what might be a vital trailway for the Nez Perce.

Chief Tendoy counciled with white leaders, and subsequently took a vote among his people, getting an agreement from them to help defend the whites. He moved some of his trusted warriors to camp near the stockade, promising the loyalty of most of his tribe, but warning the whites that he could guarantee nothing from the Bannocks and Sheep-

The most dangerous mix on the frontier—bad blood and bad whiskey!

CREEK MASSACRE

eaters at the reservation, or from certain members of his own tribe who had been angered by the decision and had broken away to probably join the Nez Perce.

It seemed that everything the pioneers could do had been done, although the fact remained that without adequate supplies all other preparations would count for nothing. But that situation was not hopeless either, because Colonel George L. Shoup, the town's most important businessman and civic leader, had left to get arms and ammunition one way or another.

Several freight wagontrains had also left to make their regular trips for the necessities which couldn't be made or grown by the settlers and miners. The worry was that the nearest supply center —Corinne, Utah—was some 300 miles away, up the Lemhi River and over the summit to Birch Creek, then down over the plains, across the Snake River and on through the mountains that lay past the present town of Pocatello to the Utah border. It took three weeks for freight wagons to make the round trip, and was dangerous at best, but with Indians on the warpath the hazards were quadrupled.

AND THEN time ran out. Late one night word was brought in that the Nez Perce war party had come over the Lolo Trail and was moving up the Bitterroot Valley along the well-worn trails that forked, and could drop down into the settlement. Within a few days, smoke signals had begun, announcing the arrival of advance scouts.

July finally closed the book on its anxious days, dragging into August with no break. Nine days later, scouts brought word that General Gibbons and his soldiers had attacked Chief Joseph's people in the Big Hole Basin, and the Indians had beaten the troops soundly in a savage counter-attack spurred by the slaughter of eighty-nine Nez Perce.

The settlers reasoned that even though Chief Joseph had fought only delaying battles up to now, he was sure to be filled by hate and sorrow this time and ready to kill any white-eye.

The next news said the chief's people were on the move again—right toward Lemhi Valley! Hysteria snapped at the heels of the people there, and it wasn't easy to maintain control. Then, in answer to many a prayer, early in the day of the 13th, a stage came pounding into town, its horses lathered and near exhaustion. Shouts went up for Colonel Shoup who was riding shotgun with the driver, and Neil McDevitt and Joe Cain who flanked the side as mounted guards. The stage was loaded with Springfield rifles and ammunition that Shoup had bought and loaded at Corinne. Scout companies, quickly supplied with new rifles, fanned out to possible trouble areas. Those remaining in the stockade were also equipped with guns and plenty of shells.

That night, signal fires burned again on the town's cemetery hill. Just shortly before, another fire's embers had sizzled angrily as Elijah Schofield doused them with a bucket of water he was carrying from Birch Creek. "No use advertising ourselves to those hopped-up Injuns," he said to his companion. (Local people, including Mrs. Verne Santos, a granddaughter of Schofield, believe this companion was George Hyde, an old-time freighter. Though there is no positive proof now available, he shall be called George herein.)

"Yeah, if them Nez Perce are in this country like we heard at Taylor's bridge, they'll know soon enough where we are," George agreed.

The two had camped for the night along Birch Creek about ninety miles from Salmon City, on the last leg of their return freight haul. "I sure wish you'd brought a gun this time, Lije," George added. "I know you ain't never carried one in all your life, but don't you have a feeling you'll need one before we get home?"

"Nope," came Lije's quick answer. "I always figgered if I had a gun that someday I'd get either mad enough or scared enough to use it, and I'd rather get killed than be a killer. Besides, even the worst gunslinger will hesitate to shoot an unarmed man."

"They'd as soon shoot you for a preacher as a damn fool," John grumbled.

Before darkness settled down, the two freighters carried their bedrolls a long way from camp and spread them out in the cover of some tall sagebrush, hoping they'd be awakened before they were spotted if any strangers showed up. And as the first hint of dawn touched the sky, they both came suddenly awake, their senses startled by sounds that wouldn't fit into the night's stillness. Lije rose slowly, glancing at George who was also coming out of his quilts. And then through the gloom they caught the first flicker of a campfire, being built in the ashes of their own. As the flames grew brighter they could make out the forms of four Indians moving around the fire.

Lije noticed movement from George's bed—he was sliding a rifle slowly out into the open. Surprised at the presence of this unknown gun, Lije reached out and grabbed it, firmly pushing it downward and signaling George to put it away.

Cautiously Lije pulled on his boots and planted his hat on his tousled head. Then he stood up, extended his arms to show empty hands and began walking slowly forward.

Catching sight of a movement in the darkness, the Indians grabbed their rifles, melting silently into the shadows, and Lije moved into plain view before stopping to stand motionless, waiting. After what seemed an eternity, one Indian stepped forward, his rifle held ready, giving Lije a look at the grotesque warpaint on his strong young features.

With great effort, Lije forced a smile and said a few Shoshoni words of greeting, hoping these warriors shared that language with their former friends and allies. The cold hatred on the brave's face gradually faded to confused doubt, and since no hostile act was shown by the white man he motioned his companions to come closer. George, who had been hovering near his bedroll and gun, inched up behind Lije, watching as Lije started a pantomime to indicate the Indians were invited to eat with the whites.

The Indians were still suspicious but gradually they all hunkered down by the fire and signalled Lije to begin fixing some food.

With an inward sigh of relief, Lije got out his sourdough and mixed up a huge batch of hotcakes. Soon a whopper was cooking in the frying pan over the fire, then tipped onto a tin plate, drowned with syrup and handed to an Indian. Obviously this was something new to the warrior, and the painted man smacked his lips over the sweet stickiness of the syrup, licking it off his fingers like a child.

Helping where he could, George found a chance to whisper to Lije, "What happens when they get their bellies full? They'll kill us and take the whole outfit, you wait and see!"

"Could be," Lije admitted, "but I still got one ace in the hole." With that, he walked over to a wagon and came back with a bag of oranges, a fruit hard to come by and considered a rare treat even by white people. He carried them on all return trips, privately thinking of them as a bribe, or maybe even a secret weapon.

After the Indians had eaten their fill of hotcakes, Lije passed the oranges around, watching as the bright orbs were closely examined. Finally one took a huge bite as if he were eating an apple. When he angrily began spitting out the bitter peeling, the others bristled, believing they'd been tricked. Lije simply had to chuckle loudly at the Indian's funny expression, and calmly took the orange and peeled it. Pure pleasure lit the brave's face when he took another bite, swiping at the juice that dribbled down his chin and over the warpaint.

The day was well underway when the Indians left, but they rode away laughing, playfully fighting over the rest of the strange fruit Lije had given them. It didn't take long for the two whites to hitch up their horses and head out, wanting to cover as much ground toward home and safety as they could before another night fell.

A FEW days later, three more freighters—Jim Hayden, Albert Greene, and Dan Coombs—were traveling homeward in a group instead of each alone, and were nearing this same place. Two Chinamen, one a doctor well-known in the mining camps and among many Indians, and three white strangers had joined the freighters somewhere along the way, hoping for safety in numbers.

The trip was uneventful until the day of August 15, when they spotted Indians bearing down on them as they approached the Birch Creek Narrows. The heavy wagons were kept lumbering on even though the white men could tell that the riders were Nez Perce—there wasn't time or room to do anything else.

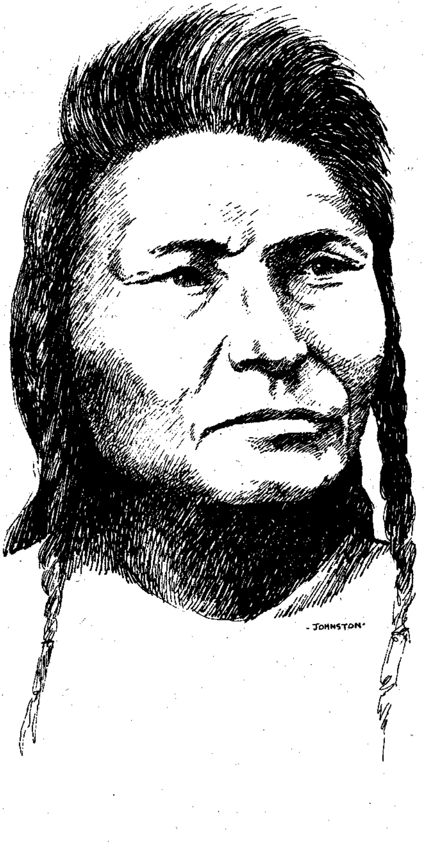
To their great relief, the lead brave held up his hand in peace, a gesture which the whites quickly returned. Of course, they didn't know of the encounter Lije and George had had, but it is quite probable that some of these Indians were among those to whom hotcakes and oranges had been given. They told of the Big Hole slaughter and the enraged tribe moving this way from their present camp where Nez Perce Creek empties into the Lemhi near Junction.

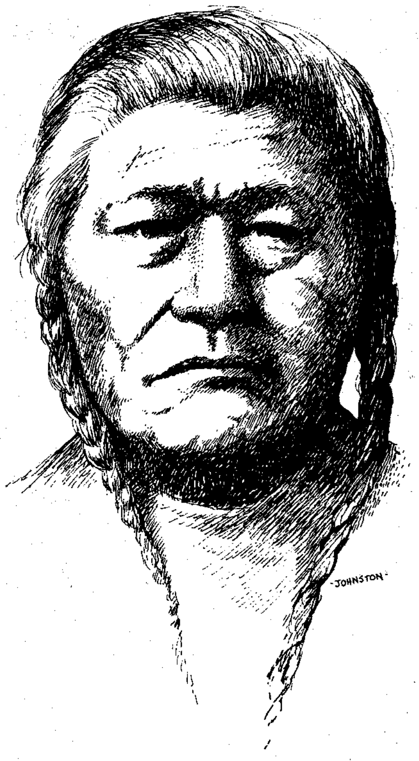
"How far away now?" Hayden asked.

"Close," answered an Indian.

Even though their sympathies may have been with the Nez Perce, not a man on the freight train doubted what would happen to them personally if they crossed the trail of the main band. As they held a hasty confab, the Indians powwowed loudly with each other. And then the spokesman returned to the whites to announce, "My red brothers will help our white brothers."

Gratefully the freighters listened as the brave told them they must get off this wagon route, return to open country and get down near Birch Creek. Without hesitation Hayden cracked his long whip over the backs of his mules, and his wagon wheels marked a new path to a spot about a mile south of the ridge that rose from the plains. A hundred yards from the stream, the men unhooked their teams and took them across the creek. Camp was made near the water, and the whites settled down as much as they could to pass the long hours ahead.





Left: Chief Joseph, the sad and embittered leader of the Non-treaty Nez Perce. Above: Chief Tendoy, leader of the Shoshone Indians on the Agency Creek Reservation, was a life-long friend of the white man.

No one paid much attention to a few of the Indians who were wandering around the huge wagons, snooping like children—maybe even looking for oranges. They spoke quietly to each other, and their voices were but a part of the summer sounds of buzzing insects, flowing creek and the occasional snort of a horse.

Then a wild whoop rang over the camp. Redmen, white men and yellow men were instantly on their feet, all eyes trained on the braves whose savage cry had raised the hair on the backs of their necks. Even without seeing, however, each freighter knew why the warrior had yelled. He had found whiskey! At the same instant, each knew instinctively that protest was futile.

BEFORE LONG, the white-eyes' red-eye had made some of the Indians very drunk, and one of them started weaving his way toward the two Chinamen standing quietly, watching nervously. No expression showed on the doctor's face as the warrior grabbed one of his arms and then placed his own alongside. Obviously the yellow skin fascinated the man with red skin, and he shouted for his tribesmen to look at the difference in color.

Several other Indians circled the Chinaman, pointing and jabbering and laughing. The long pigtail came in for special attention. "Rope on pony!" suggested an Indian, and began leading the hapless Chinamen around by his queue. Another Indian went further—he forced the other Chinaman down to his hands and knees, jumped on his back, and booted the sacred "pony" in the ribs, guiding him by jerking the long hank of hair from side to side.

Another brave was soon astride the doctor, who buckled under the weight and flattened out. Yanked back up into position, he braced himself as the Indian came down on his back again, but he wasn't prepared for the flaming stick of wood that suddenly seared into his flesh. His yelp of pain was ignored by the Indians, but his involuntary lurching delighted them. More burning wood was seized from the campfire, and both Chinamen became bucking broncs under the hands of their riders.

The white men had been watching closely, hoping the Indians would soon tire of their game, or else that the sober Indians, who weren't taking part, would stop their drunken tribesmen. But when the smoldering brands continued to be used Hayden's temper and bullwhip exploded simultaneously. The whistle of the blacksnake ended in a crack as loud as a gunshot right over the heads of the tormentors.

(Continued on page 46)

THE FIGHTIN'EST COW I EVER SAW!

She was sort of like a haired-over bullnettle with a kink...

Harve Caywood and Paul Huntley in 1929, while gathering wild cattle.

BY PAUL L. HUNTLEY

Reprinted with permission from **BLACK MOUNTAIN COWBOYS: A Collection of Stories** by Paul L. Huntley © 1976. Photo Courtesy Author

IT WAS BACK in the winter of 1928-29, I hired Harve Caywood to help me gather the rest of our wild cattle. We had gathered 200 cows and calves and sold them to Bill Smith of South Canon City. His range was south of the Arkansas River and our range was north of the river. Harve had worked for Smith as a cowboy on his ranch for a long time. In this rough country two cowboys spent all winter riding after the calves that were missed on the summer round-ups. Most of the calves were branded and then turned loose, but the big old wild steers were run down and tied up overnight, then led out and put in a field that had a good fence around it. They were usually put in with some tame cattle, then were sold in the spring.

Selling these cows and calves had gotten rid of a lot of our wild cattle. Only a few of our cattle were so wild that you were unable to hold them in a bunch or drive them any distance. But they could outrun you where the trees and brush was real thick. This was because they always got a head start and you couldn't see them anymore. Then you would have to track them till they came out into the open country. When a cow finally tired of running she would run at your horse and hook hell out of him if you didn't get away from there. In order to protect the horse two men would usually work together to get one of these cattle.

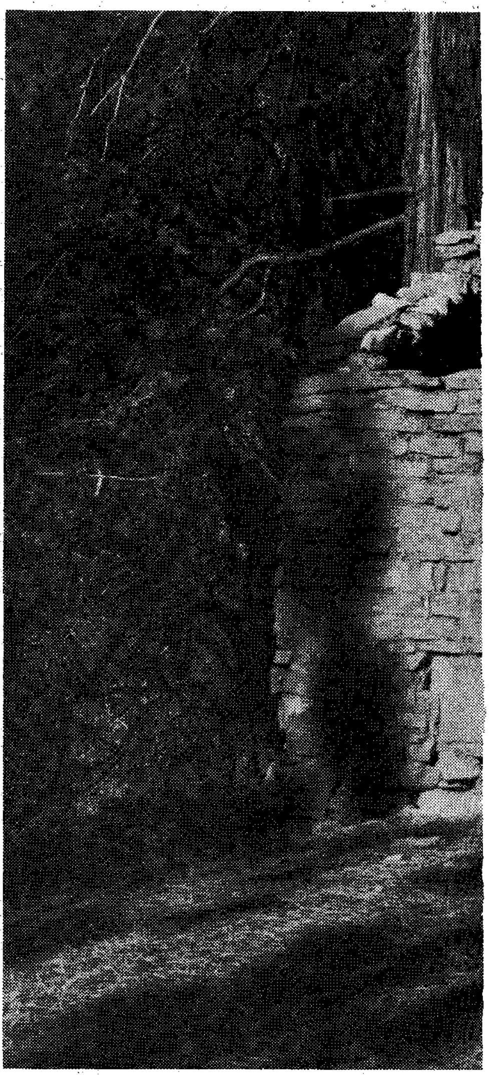
A lot of cowboys used a 60-foot rope to catch the big steers. This long rope

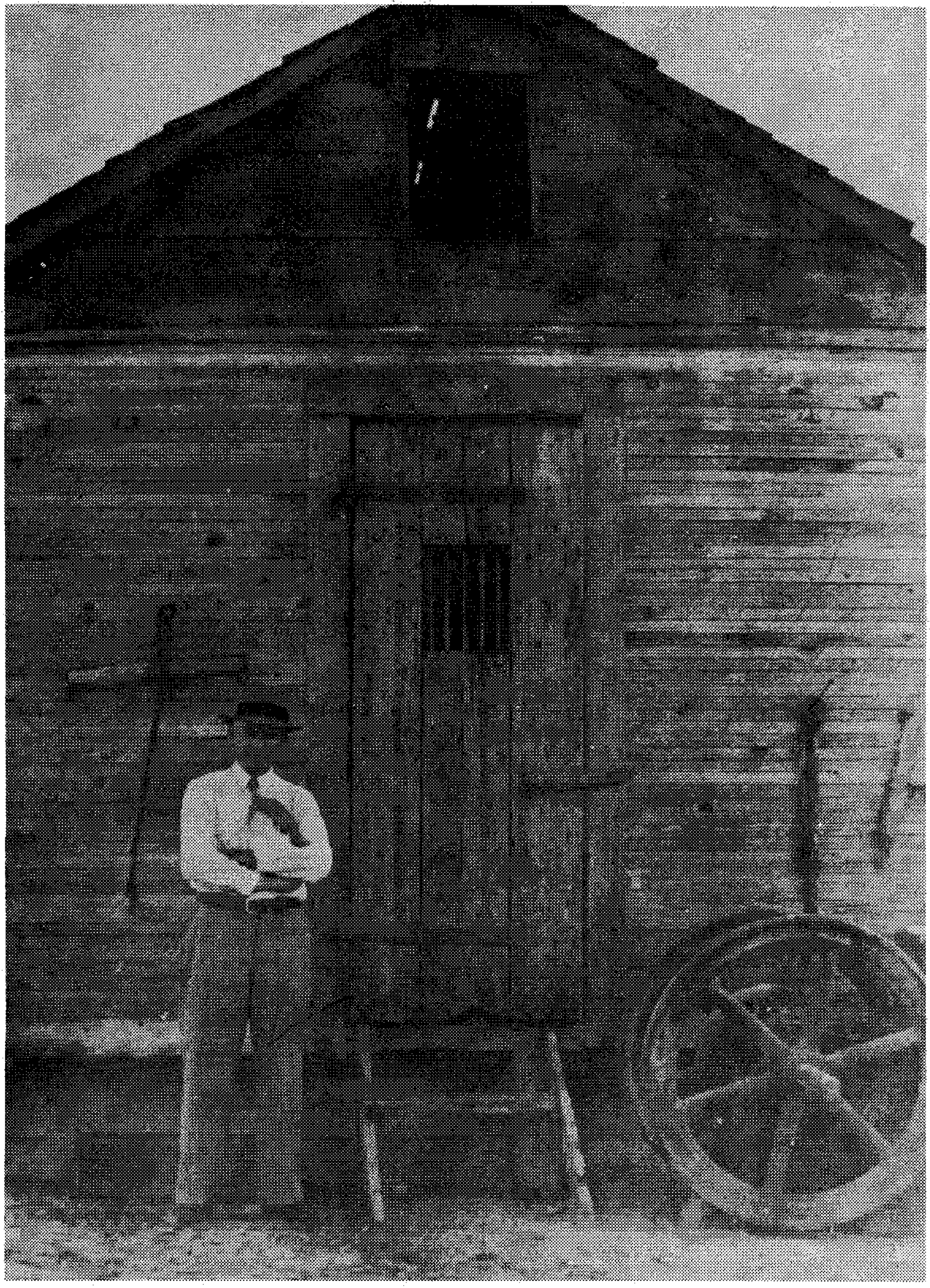
(Continued on page 27)

LOST GOLD LEDGE

What was he like—this man who found the ledge? A victim of false evidence or a murderer?

Below: Ft. Dugan, Madera, California. The man is unidentified. Mormon Jimmie stayed in this jail just long enough to take a spoon and a tin cup and dig himself out. Right: The late James Geddis stands in front of the ruins of Mormon Jimmy's cabin. The Geddis family operated a gold mine several miles to the south of Jimmy's missing ledge.





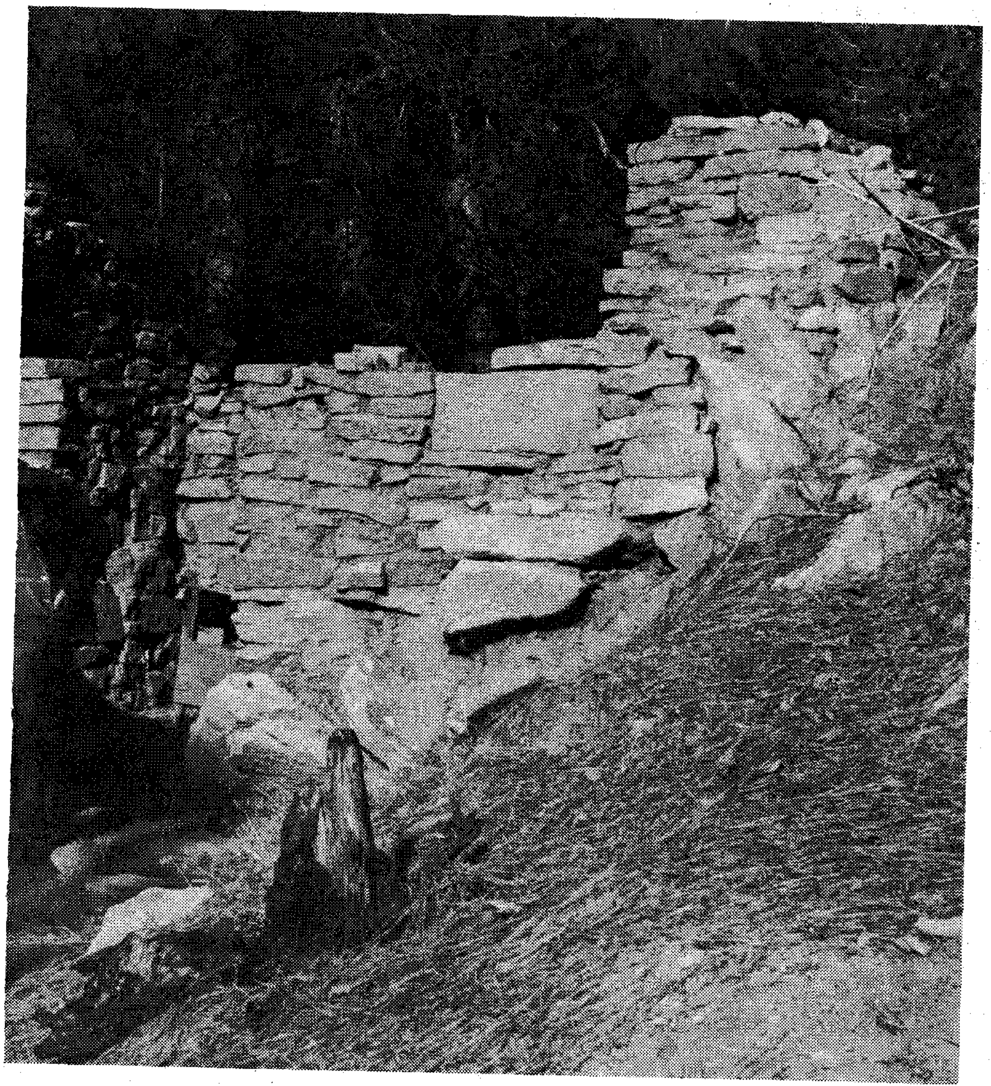
BY WILLIAM KLETTE

Photos Courtesy Author

ALL the lost gold ledges in the world aren't tucked away in inaccessible canyons or surrounded by impassable deserts. Sometimes they can be within a few miles of civilization. There's one, in the exact center of California, whose location is marked on present-day Forest Service maps.

It all started back in the summer of 1889, when James Lawson arrived in the tiny Sierra Nevada logging community of North Fork. No one knew why he came. Quiet, unobtrusive even when among friends, Lawson was never one to share a confidence. But he did admit

OF MORMON JIMMY



once to having lived in Utah and this, coupled with the fact that he didn't drink or use tobacco, caused the locals to nickname him "Mormon Jimmy."

For the next few years Jimmy's activities around North Fork are rather obscure. He may have prospected along the San Joaquin River; he may have worked at one of the large mines on Fine Gold Creek ten miles to the west. In any case, when he returned to North Fork a few years later to stake a claim on the heavily timbered south slope of Whiskey Ridge above town, he brought along a wife and a baby daughter.

Jimmy built a stone cabin for his family to live in, and next to it a small arrastre powered with a high, wooden wheel. Spring water from a meadow several miles up the ridge was diverted via a hand-dug ditch to turn the wheel. Then without any apparent pattern or plan, he proceeded to pocket the hillside with deep shafts and to gopher back into the mountain with at least two long tunnels.

For a short time Jimmy had a partner named Ben Norris, but Ben was a prospector, not a miner, and there's a difference. Mining is hard work. Then the two men had a bitter argument over the amount of gold that was recovered during one milling. After a few months of bickering, their partnership was dissolved.

No one knows exactly how much gold Jimmy took out of his mine, but with the help of his wife it was enough to take good care of their needs and to buy a homestead a few miles to the south.

The late William A. Ellis, who was a Madera County supervisor from 1903 to 1929, told of having once watched Jimmy add quicksilver to the ground-up ore in the bottom of his arrastre, and recollected that over three hundred dollars in a spongy amalgam was taken out in that one run.

Jimmy never said much about his mine; just that he had cut across a ledge of "pretty rock" that was heavy with tiny flakes of gold. In later years his ex-partner, Ben Norris, agreed. The gold was "free," he said, easily reclaimable, and spotted throughout the rusty looking quartz.

THEN one hot evening in the summer of 1900, a single rifle bullet blew Jimmy's little world to pieces. Somehow he shot and killed his young daughter. Jimmy always claimed it was an accident, that he thought he was shooting at a wild animal prowling around the cabin; but his wife, anxious to be off the mountain and away from the long days of hard work, swore he had shot the little girl in a fit of anger because she wouldn't stop crying.

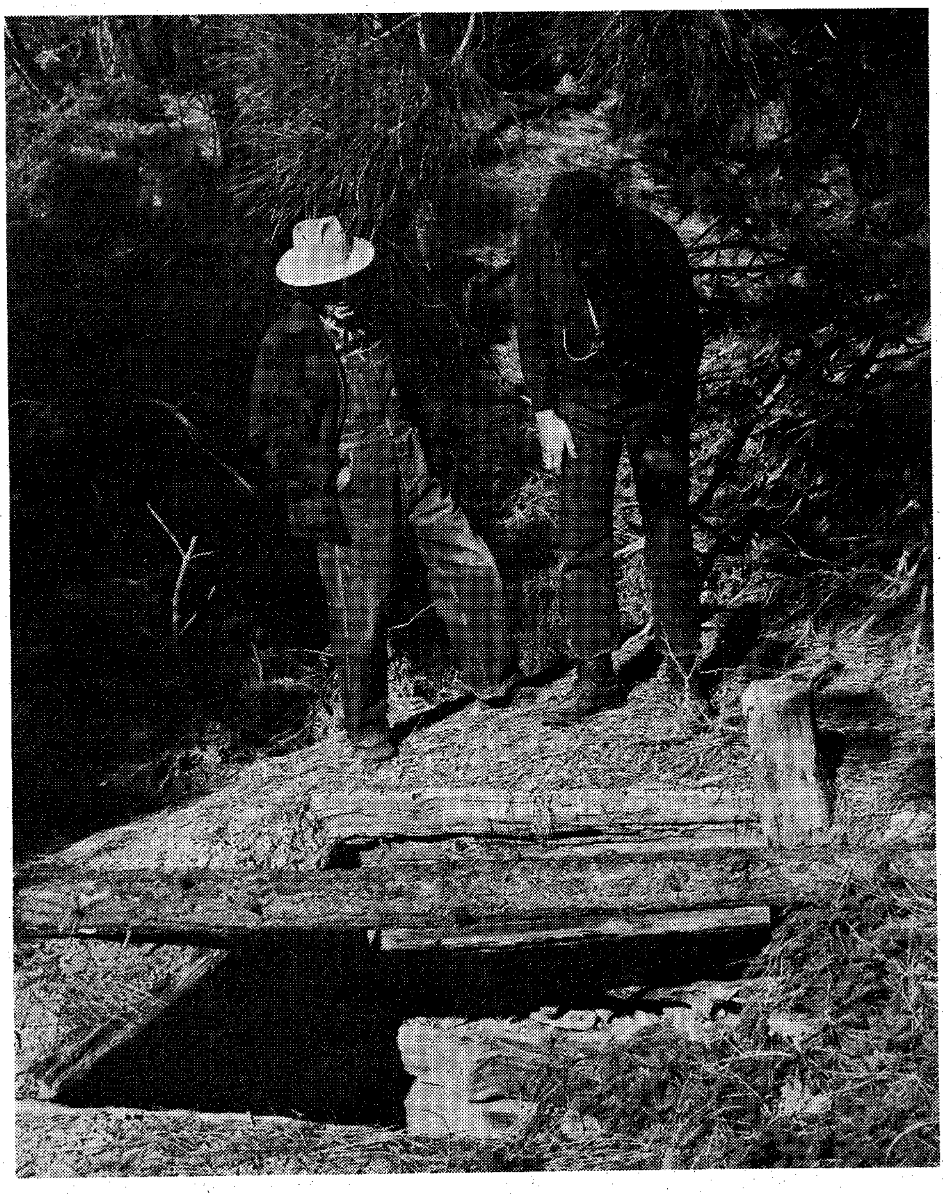
Jimmy was arrested and taken to the county seat at Madera to stand trial. The jail was a small, rather carelessly built building, perhaps twelve feet square, nicknamed Fort Dugan after James Dugan, an Irish plumber who spent almost every Saturday night there. The single room had a dirt floor, and late one night, right after his arrival, Jimmy took a bent spoon and his tin cup and dug himself out.

For several months he wandered through the mountains around North Fork, even showing up one night at a dance where he took a shot at his wife for not being in proper mourning after losing a daughter and almost a husband. Finally he was caught again, tried, convicted of manslaughter, and sentenced to San Quentin.

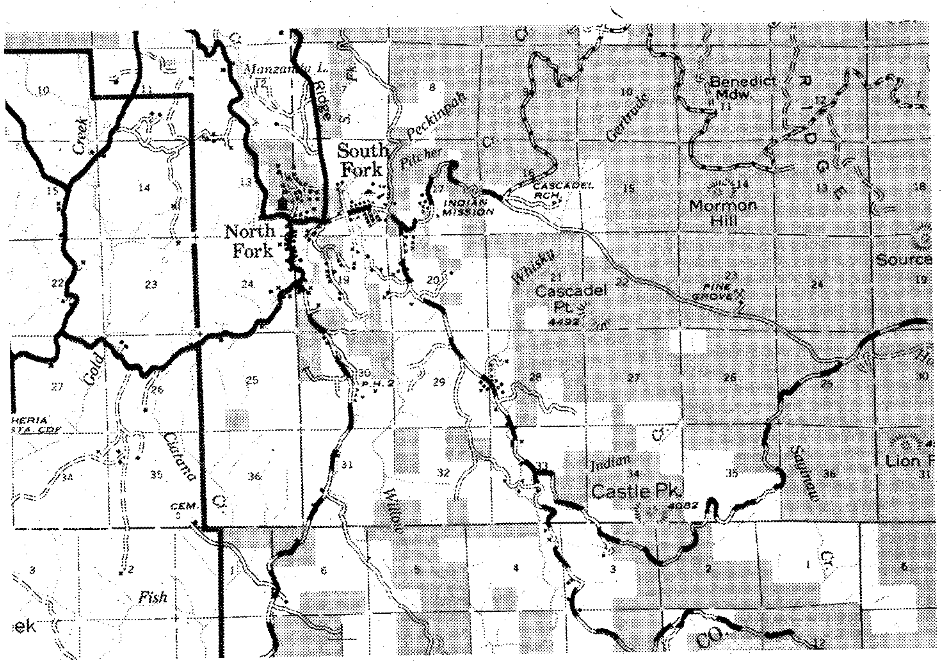
But Jimmy was as slippery as the quicksilver he used in his mining. On the train to prison, not far from the town of Lodi, his guard, Sheriff Sam Westfall, fell asleep. As the sheriff sat napping in his coach chair, Jimmy quietly got up, tiptoed to the back of the train, and jumped off. For two days he hid under the roots of a huge oak until the incessant yapping of a farmer's small dog betrayed him to a posse.

Once safely lodged in prison, Jimmy became a model inmate. A hard worker, he so impressed authorities at San Quentin that they asked the Madera courts to review his case.

On the basis that he had been convicted solely on the prejudicial testimony of his wife, he was paroled after serving only a few years.



James Geddis (left) and unidentified man looking down one of Mormon Jimmy's shafts on Mormon Hill. Logging operations over the past fifty years have partially hidden the holes and makes prospecting hazardous.



BUT things were not the same when Jimmy returned home to the mountains. He was broke, in ill health, and all of his neighbors looked at him with suspicion. At the mine, the long ditch that fed the water wheel had flooded and washed away the arrastre. His shafts had filled with debris from winter storms and the mouth of one tunnel had collapsed. Someone had set fire to his cabin; only the stone walls were standing. Even the homestead was gone, sold by his wife to meet expenses.

For a time Jimmy worked along Fine Gold Creek to get enough money for a grubstake. Then with Emil Modest, a friend from prison days, he tried to reopen his mine. It was a half-hearted venture at best, and the two men moved to Madera where they eventually died as wards of the county in the General Hospital.

Immediately following Jimmy's death, a distant relative refiled on the claim and spent several years cleaning out the old shafts and extending the tunnels deeper into the mountain. But no further trace of Jimmy's rusty-looking quartz was ever found.

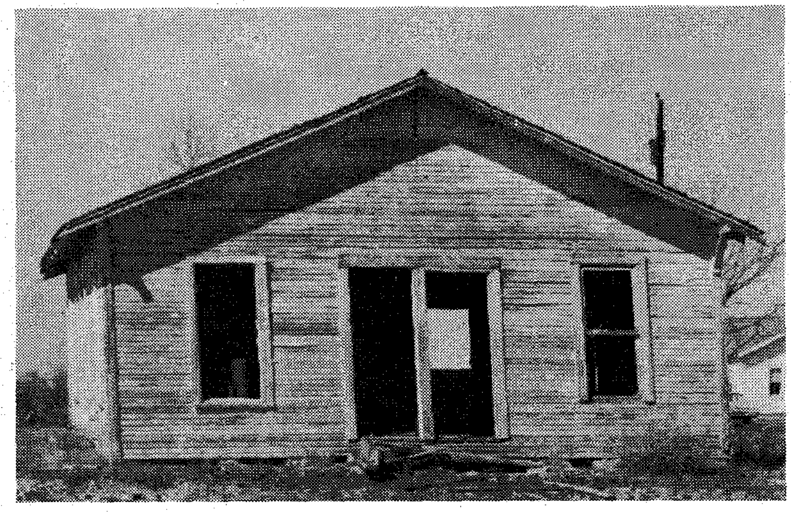
Today, the high waterwheel is gone, burned by a movie company filming a forest fire scene, and logging operations over the past fifty years have all but obliterated the long ditch that fed it. All that remains at the site are the walls of the old cabin. And if you look closely you can still see, scratched in the rock above the mouth of the fireplace, the faint letters, "M-U-R-D-E-R-E-D."

In a nearby gully, waist deep in icy water, is the brush-covered mouth of one of the tunnels. On the ridge behind the cabin, almost hidden by logging slash, are several of the old shafts. But what of the gold? Did Mormon Jimmy find it all in those first few years, or does his ledge of "pretty rock" still lie somewhere under the pine-covered hillside? A few cynics said that there never was any gold, that Jimmy used his claim to get rid of ore stolen from the old Ragsdale Mine on Fine Gold Creek where he was supposed to have worked earlier. But it seems unlikely that anyone would go to the trouble of digging so many holes just to cover up a theft. And Ben Norris, his ex-partner, who reportedly might exaggerate a bit but who never lied, insisted that there was such a rich ledge.

The presence of gold in the area is well documented. Just to the south on Oat Mountain is the old Geddis Mine. And draining from Whiskey Ridge toward the San Joaquin River is Indian Creek where color can still be panned. Geologists say it is quite possible that the ledge Jimmy tapped is still waiting for some lucky finder.

The mine site can be reached easiest by driving east through North Fork and out the Cascadel Road toward Lions Point. It is marked on the 1972 Sierra National Forest Service map as the Pine Grove Mine. In Jimmy's memory, the highest point north of the mine site is called Mormon Hill. (*See map to left.*)

NIGHT RAID ON LEADAY



First schoolhouse at Leaday as it looked in 1966.

The little Texas town hadn't been in such peril since Indian days—according to its "heroes"!

BY WALTER W. GANN

Photo Courtesy Author

IN 1905 Leaday, Texas wasn't much more than a wide place in the road situated in the southwest corner of Coleman County. (The space is not so wide now.) No one could foresee that the automobile and paved roads would all but obliterate country trading centers. There were two stores, a post office, a blacksmith shop, a small dry goods shop, and a sizeable hotel erected by the Day Ranch Company and leased out to a couple to operate. There were less than twenty inhabitants in the town, counting the regular boarders at the hotel.

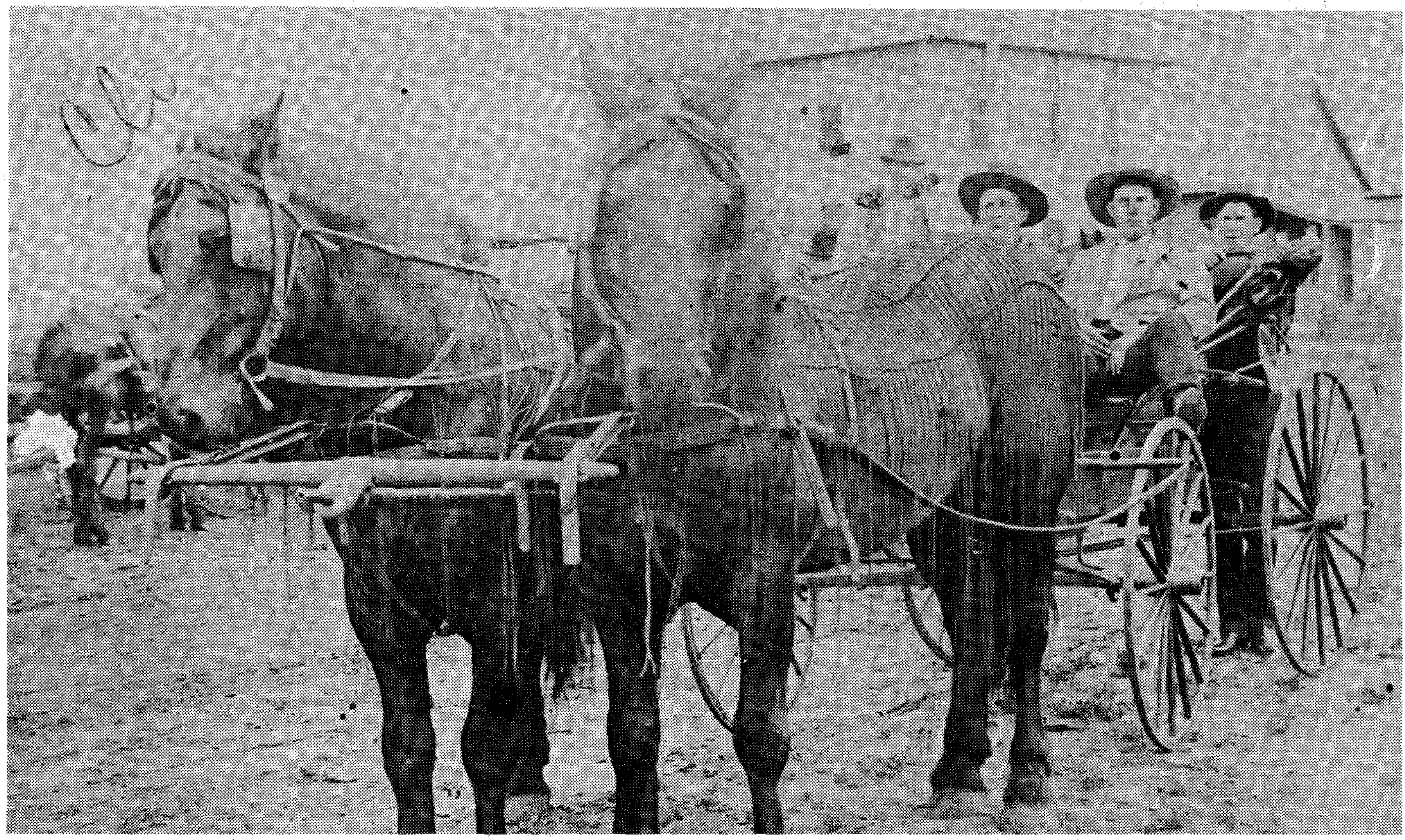
One of the stores was operated by an old blowhard who signed his name "J. J. Johnson." He boasted so much about the significance of those three "Js" that most people referred to him as "Old Three J." He called his .44 pistol "Old Blue" and he intimated that he was always ready to use it. He talked tough and he was tough, according to his own rating. However, I saw him one time when his tough posture softened up like a wet sponge.

His wife was a little, dried-up creature with a bird beak and a sour look like she was grinding her teeth. Their daughter was a voluptuous, eighteen-year-old redhead totally different from her parents in manner and looks.

The raid came about as the result of a harmless little poker game which involved all three members of the Johnson family. The biggest stake—won or lost—didn't amount to as much as the cost of a small bag of groceries. That kind of gambling wouldn't hurt anybody; and yet it was against the law.

Time was when we could hold our little sociable games now and then without having to hide out, but our free and easy style of life had been changed. After the Day Ranch Company cut up a large portion of its land holdings into small tracts and sold them to farmers from other areas, a different breed of people moved into our country and took over. Some of them boasted that they had

(Continued on page 42)



On the left, seated in the buggy (partially blocked from view by the near horse) is Ruel Packer; next to him is his son-in-law Harve Zin. Thurman Arthur (T. A.) Packer is standing behind the buggy.

Ruel Packer And His Boys

Sketch by Author

It didn't take much to keep them happy—
a few quail on the ground,
a little rain in the air,
once in a while a ride into town to hold a deck and hoist a glass . . .

BY C. L. PACKER

Photos Courtesy Author

A LITTLE four-year-old boy, burdened with an armload of dry cornstalks, hurried as fast as he could against the bitter cold wind. Snow flurries swept the bleak Kansas landscape. A woman opened the door of the small farmhouse and the youngster stumbled in and piled the cornstalks on the floor, opened the stove door and replenished the near-dead fire.

The man of the house had made his daily trip to town—which was usual on days like this—and was now playing checkers in a "town club" building which was well heated by a big-bellied coal stove, glowing cherry-red.

The small boy, Earl Packer, was the youngest of three children of Ruel Packer, whose wife had died in Ohio a year and a half earlier. The father, with his two sons and a daughter, had moved to near Mt. Hope, Kansas planning on making a living on a rented farm. But hard times pounded on their door and the oldest son, Thurman Arthur ("T. A."), then nearing nine, and the daughter, Arminta ("Mint"), about seven, were farmed out for their keep to different families in the vicinity. Soon a home was found for Earl with the checker-playing farmer and his wife. This gave Ruel a chance to look around for work so he could pay rent on the farm with hopes of later doing better by his children.

Being a great lover of horses and expert in their training and care, he located work and in a few years was able to gather his brood under a roof of another rented farmhouse. But before this, young Earl had worked for his keep with several different families, one couple named Rutledge. They were very good to the little boy and the man, especially, was always dearly loved by Earl who never forgot the kind treatment.

In those days ducks and geese, during their annual migration southward, sometimes blackened the skies over the Arkansas River. Men and boys found hunting them fine sport and a way of adding something delicious to the usual menu. Earl often watched his big brother and pals leave for hunting along the river, and how he wished that he could join them. One day they took him along and showed him how to handle a 12-gauge shotgun with care. Soon he was bringing in ducks, geese and rabbits—also going around with a badly bruised shoulder.

As Christmas neared, his dad asked him what he most wanted for a present. The youngster's sharp blue eyes had spotted an old gun hanging on the wall of a neighbor's house. He didn't know what kind it was, only that it was the most desirable thing he could ever hope for. So now he told his dad that gun was *it*. Ruel took $5 in hard-earned cash and gave the little boy the old weapon—a Civil War musket "reconverted to handle shotgun shells," according to what I was told some seventy-five or eighty years later. Also, he cleared up a point I'd wondered about—why a right-handed man shot a rifle or shotgun left-handed as he did.

It seems that when Earl began his hunting career in Kansas his right shoulder became sore as a boil, but he wouldn't quit. He tried shooting left-handed and when that shoulder became sore he'd switch. Soon he found it more natural to shoot a shotgun or rifle left-handed even after his shoulders got toughened up.

For awhile hunting became the little boy's only sport, until he became a pupil in a country school with, as we've often heard him say, "the best teacher in the world—Florence Flowers." During recesses and noon hours he learned to play baseball, using a "string ball" fashioned out of yarn from worn-out socks. This game became his chief form of relaxation during the rest of his long and very busy life.

THERE was practically no timber on the prairie around Mt. Hope, except along the streams. Bluestem grew about ten inches high and there was much buffalo and bunch grass, a haven for quail, prairie chickens and rabbits. The boys found it was real handy for T. A. to shoot right-handed and Earl left-handed when hunting because, walking abreast, their guns were readied at the proper positions when game was flushed out.

Two men at Mt. Hope and a nearby farmer bought prairie chickens, quail and rabbits for shipment to eastern markets—but no wild turkeys, they were too plentiful. A lot of youngsters, including Earl and T. A., cashed in on the deal. They soon learned how helpful good bird dogs could be, mainly for quail, so dogs became a *must* to them in the work, and work it was, but the kind those Kansas kids and many grown-ups sure did like.

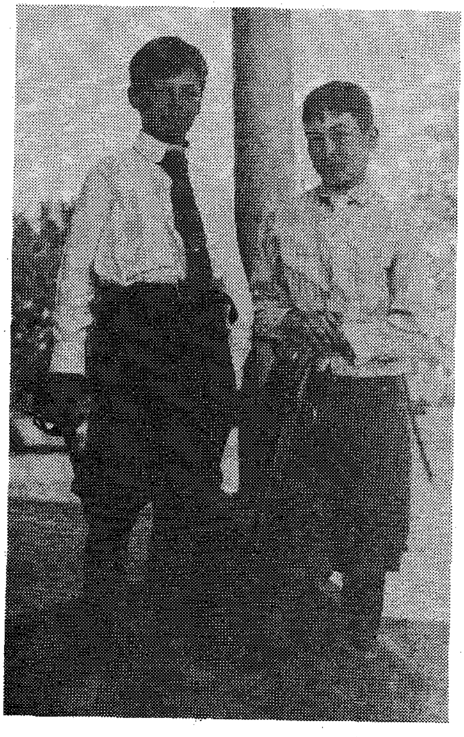
At seventeen Earl teamed up with "Cal," an older fellow, for a hunting jaunt to western Kansas in a tall-grass area. Earl had a red, short-haired dog; his friend's was black and long-haired. They took off, dogs and all, in a covered wagon. On arrival at the hunting grounds Earl met a boy about his own age—a youngster Cal knew real well. The kid was staying with relatives or friends. The three went hunting. With the youngster was a bird dog belonging to these people—a white-and-liver-colored, short-haired pooch.

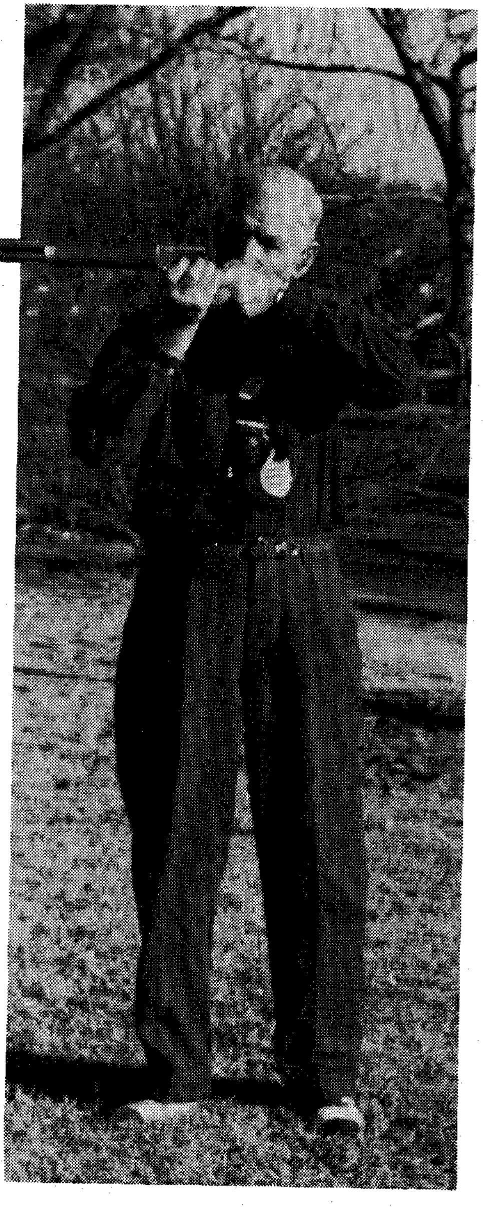
They hunted there about a week and when ready to leave, Cal liked the liver-colored dog so well he made a dicker with the kid though he knew the dog belonged to the folks the kid was staying with. Earl recalled, "That new dog followed us everywhere so long as we carried guns. He was wild about them—knew they meant birds! When we left the kid at his place and pulled out, the dog was in our wagon. Cal promised the boy he'd leave $5 at a vacant house a few miles away. The boy was green and fell for it. We passed the house but didn't stop. I wasn't surprised since I knew Cal was ornery and didn't have the money anyway.

"Maybe ten or fifteen miles later we looked back and saw a horseman ridin' *slantin,'* hell-bent-for-leather! Seems the folks who owned the bird dog found out about the deal and called the law. That's who was chasin' us. Cal knew the country real well, exactly where the county line was. We had a dandy team and Cal poured it on 'em, kept 'em in a high lope but the horsebacker was gainin'. We were goin' west but now turned north, then made another turn to the Edwards County line. I think we had been in Reno County. By the time we crossed the line our horses had tuckered and slowed down.

"The guy caught up with us, hot as a firecracker, and told us what all he was goin' to do with us for stealin' that bird dog. Old Cal talked right back—said, 'Hell, we didn't steal this dog. He just follered us and we couldn't make him

Below: Clair Packer, left, and friend, Hillman Deam on the front steps of the Deam residence in Geary, Oklahoma around 1910. Right: Earl Packer in 1949 demonstrating his left-handed aim.





go back! We put him in the wagon so his feet wouldn't get sore.'

"The guy asked, 'Then why was you drivin' so fast?' Cal eyed him straight on and said, 'We was jus' wantin' to get on home.' They jawboned about fifteen minutes and finally the man simmered down some, took the dog and away they went back from where we'd come.

"Once when we stopped, my dog, a female, got lost some way or another. Cal's went on with us back home. Before we went to bed that night my dog showed up—she had trailed us on in—some nose!"

Plenty of hunting was done when Earl, much too young to file on land, managed in some way for a claim on a bend of the South Canadian River out from Taloga. He never explained exactly how he got it. Could be, authorities then weren't too diligent in their work, or possibly the one Earl dealt with was new on the job and not too apt.

EARL had come down into that area from Kansas—a bit of wanderlust guiding him. Wild game was abundant in this country of sandhills, black-jack oaks and grasslands. Deer, prairie chickens and quail were what caught his eye. Soon T. A. and a couple of Kansas friends joined him.

Right off they built a hunting camp, a half-dugout structure—a dugout topped with logs above the cave and roofed with poles, brush and sod.

During the fall before the days turned too chilly the fellows did a lot of swimming in the river. To avoid arguments as to who was to do what it was agreed that each one would take his turn at cooking and each do his own dish-washing. Dishes consisted of a tin plate, tin cup and knife and fork for each guy. Grub? Earl said, "Well—mostly fried stuff. Spuds, onions, flapjacks, beans, sowbelly and coffee. When we wanted something extra it would be quail, prairie chicken, turkey and venison—now and then a channel cat. Winters were much colder then. Deer were easy to get."

When cold weather came, the hunters set out early each morning with guns, plenty of ammo, a bird dog and gunny sacks. Sportsmanship wasn't thought of in those days. They were after quail for shipment to market and got them the quickest way they knew with the least output of ammunition because "dollars were real scarce."

Earl said, "We began sellin' quail to a meat market in Kingfisher. Now and then they'd buy a deer and a few prairie chickens, but no *turkeys*. Folks could almost knock them off with sticks.

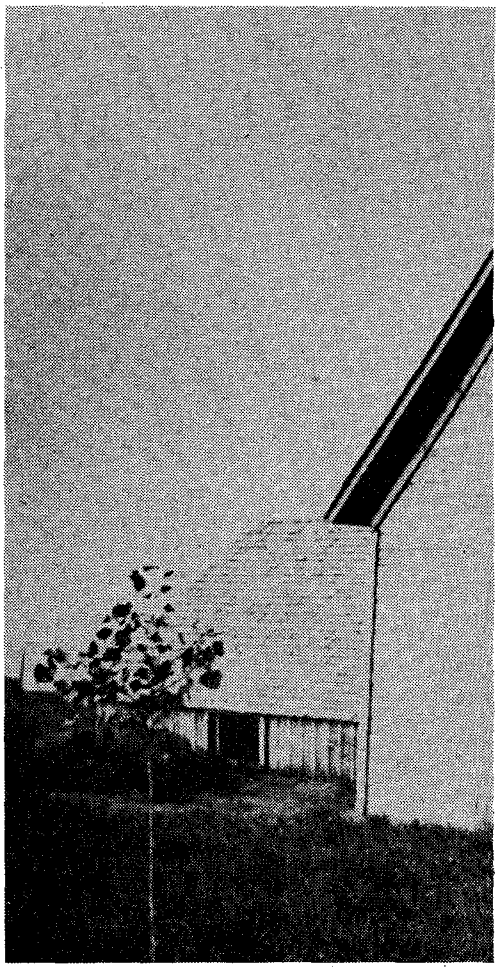
"Then we began shippin' quail by train to far-off markets—Kansas City, St. Louis and a place in Pennsylvania. All we did was pack 'em in wooden boxes. They'd freeze overnight. Then we'd take 'em to a railhead and off they'd go. I've wondered in what shape they arrived at their destinations—I always thought some of those quail might have been a bit too ripe when unpacked. I sure wouldn't have wanted to eat 'em, but the outfits always paid off and that helped out a lot. Lots of other critters were around our camp—coyotes, skunks, civet cats, 'possums, 'coons, weasels, owls, hawks and a few golden eagles. We didn't bother any of them—kinda liked havin' 'em around."

Ruel Packer decided to make a trip from Kansas down into "Injun Country" to see his sons. He drove there in a rig and enjoyed the hunting camp a lot. The two Kansas pals had returned home. When Ruel decided to leave, his sons, with the bird dog, accompanied him in the buggy. It was now beautiful spring weather. Wildflowers were everywhere and Ruel relished the drive, especially along the North Canadian Valley to the railroad station in El Reno. Ruel liked the land along the river north of Geary so much that he took most of his savings, from long hours of work training horses, farming and doing anything else available, and bought a farm. There was a good well there and a two-story, white frame house. Quail were plentiful in this area. That winter T. A. and Earl helped the larder by supplying quail and prairie chickens plus some venison. They'd hunt all day, and return well fagged in the evening with stuffed sacks. While Ruel fixed supper the hungry boys hung the quail high on the north side of the house, out of reach of varmints. Next morning they'd take the frozen birds, pack them in wooden boxes and ship them to those same eastern markets. By now quail marketing was being done over much of the "Twin Territories"—Oklahoma Territory in the west and Indian Territory to the east. Clate Hannan, a friend of the Packers, was a quail shipper at Geary, hunting them along both the North and South Canadian Rivers and buying from local hunters. Netting was against the law, and lawmen in Indian Territory where quail were netted extensively soon put a stop to much of the activity in that area.

Earl said, "Now and then when T. A. didn't go huntin' with me, I used to drive a buggy to save walking; and my horse was the best buggy horse I ever had—of racehorse breed but not too big. When drivin' along and a covey of quail flew up he'd turn without me guidin' him and follow in the direction they took. Of course he couldn't tell where they went but he did *start* in the right direction. Though he was real high spirited, he was so well trained that when I dropped the lines and jumped out of the buggy I could shoot all around him and he'd not even flinch! Sure was a good horse."

Then Earl got a hankering to check on his South Canadian River hunting camp. He returned but found no dugout! The land on which it had been built had bordered right on the riverbank. During his absence most of his claim's sandy soil had been washed away by a big flood. Seems any illegalities which may have been perpetrated when Earl got the land had been squared up by Ma Nature!

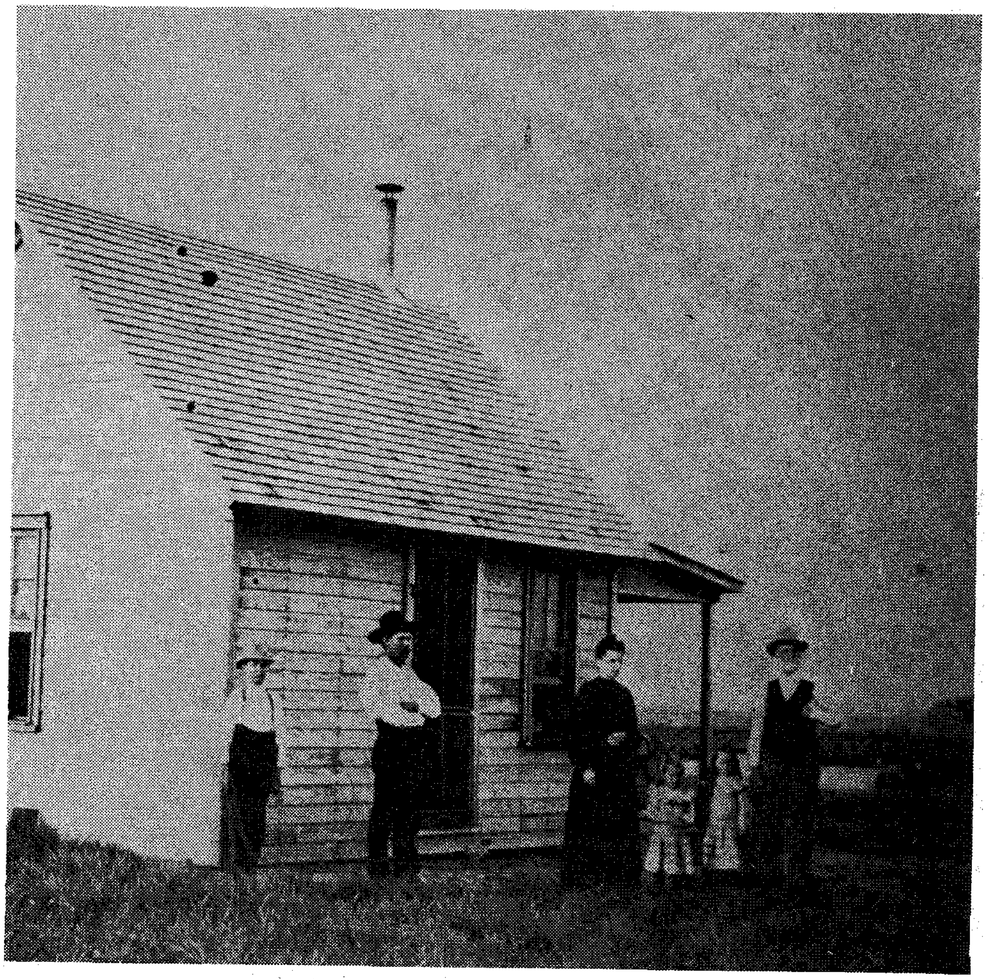
WHEN the Cherokee Strip (Outlet) opened, T. A. rode a fast roan horse in the race and got a good claim out from Pond Creek, a fine piece of land. But he had other things on his mind, having had all the farming he wanted for the time being. A Dutchman took up a claim adjoining his. He told T. A. they could



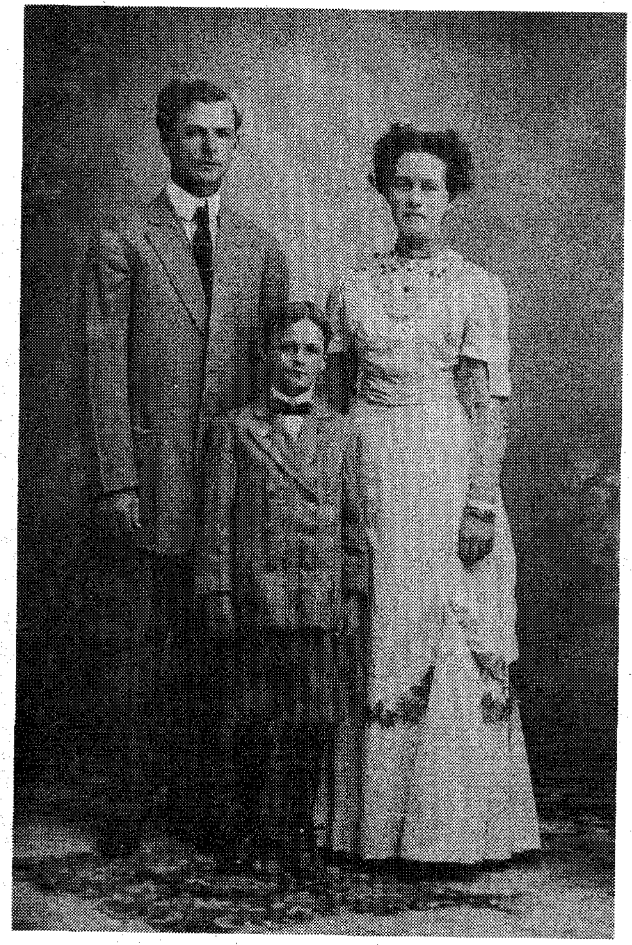
save work by digging a half-dugout dwelling together, part of it extending onto each claim. T. A. fell for that.

While the other guy fulfilled his obligations to Uncle Sam by plowing up some of his land and staying put, T. A. rambled off and got a job guarding a railroad bridge. There was a feud going on between Pond Creek and another jerkwater railroad station. Bridges were being burned, trains wrecked, and a lot of other devilment was going on. Not far from the bridge T. A. guarded was a liquor joint. He'd go there too often, "wetting his whistle." Once, when he'd imbibed too much, he got in an argument with another boozed-up fellow. T. A. turned his head toward the bar and the man grabbed a quart bottle and banged him over the head just as T. A. turned to face him. The blow broke the bottle, leaving the neck in the man's hand. The follow-through with the dagger-like glass neck caught T. A. just below the point of one jaw—ripped under his throat and slit it clear to the other side—almost to that ear. T. A. got the man down and was beating him up when all at once he toppled off onto the floor from loss of blood. That woke up a drunken bystander enough so that he lit out after a doctor who came real quick and sewed up T. A.'s neck, saving his life. "Doc" said the jugular vein was exposed by the gash, but not touched, and said he could see it palpitating while he did the sewing.

A quiet-like man was in the joint at this time and saw it all happen. He must



▲ Photo Courtesy Marie Zin George



Top of the page: (from left to right) Charlie Zin, Harve Zin, Ruel Packer's daughter Arminta Zin, Georgia Zin, Alta Zin, and Ruel Packer. Left: Earl, his son C. L. and wife Georgia Tony, taken in Geary, Oklahoma about 1907. Above: T. A. holding the author's daughter Barbara Jo. Rita Vaughan, the author's other daughter, is standing next to him.

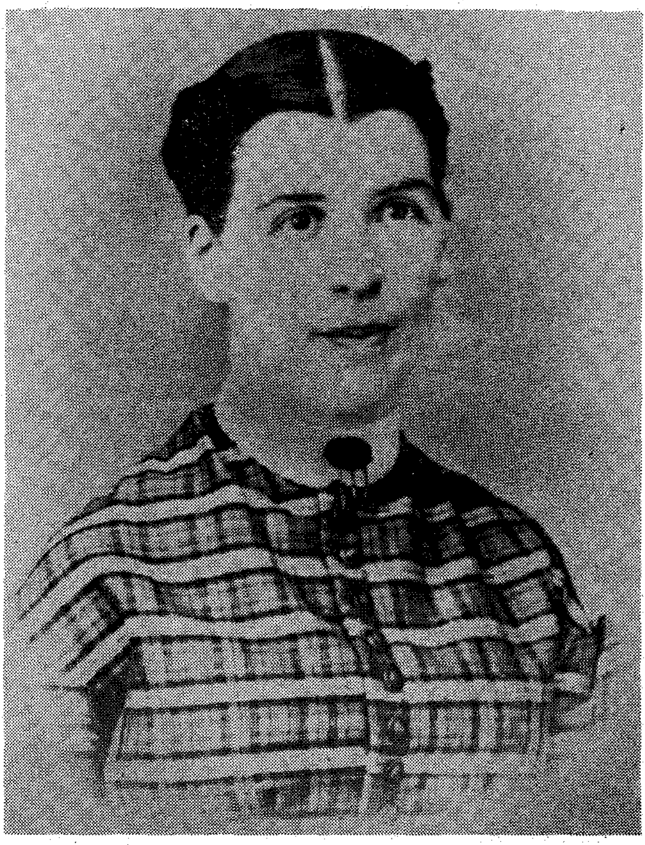
have taken a liking to T. A. as was proved by the following: The Dutchman on the adjoining claim evidently tipped off government officials that T. A. wasn't living up to regulations, and to complicate things more, seems he got friends or relatives to come in with a covered wagon and a plow. They pulled onto T. A.'s land. The driver hitched his team to the plow and began work.

T. A. didn't know how many might be inside the wagon or if they had guns ready for action—and besides, he'd been tipped off he was going to lose his claim. Under the circumstances he thought it best to play it safe, so he just stood there cussing to himself and wondering what to do next, when all of a sudden a rifle shot cracked. The slug kicked up dirt real close to the plowman. Then a shout came from a brush thicket about seventy-five yards away, "Yawl bettah git goin' from that man's land—and stay away!" Another bullet striking near the wagon punctuated the man's yell. The plowman hurried back to the wagon with team and plow, loaded it on, hitched to the wagon and whipped away at a fast trot while (so T. A. said), "Ol' Dutch peeked from the dugout but didn't come out."

Now the tall stranger, who'd watched the liquor joint brawl, ambled up with a Winchester cradled under one arm. He stopped to say this, "You won't be havin' no more trouble from such folks as them (pointing to the disappearing wagon, then to the dugout) if you keep yore claim and want to settle down to farmin'—which I don't think you do. Anyhow, I'm staying in these parts for a spell and will be seein' you around now and then." Then the man moseyed back toward the thicket. Rumors floating around had it that this stranger was an outlaw on the dodge from Texas.

The only thing other than horse and mule trading that ever kept Earl Packer from work was a baseball game. I never knew a more dedicated fan. He began playing baseball while living on the farm north of Geary—"country ball" now and then—on Sundays mostly. He was good enough that a part-blood Indian, over El Reno way—an inveterate gambler who would and did bet on anything—hired Earl to play on his team. The man also had a string of racehorses and usually won his bets.

When you hear of modern-day athletes traveling over the country in planes it's quite a switch from those early-day baseball players who occasionally went by train but more often in horse-or mule-drawn rigs and on horseback. The South Canadian, with a reputation of being one of the worst of all streams for quicksand, was one river these players often had to ford. Usually there were Indians in the vicinity moving around on horseback. So to avoid being sucked down by the treacherous sand, the traveling baseball team would wait patiently for some Indian to ride along. Waiting was never long. The Indian would give a friendly wave, jog right on to the river and without a pause ride across. Earl said Indians never hit a boggy place; in some uncanny way they seemed to know exactly where to cross. And the baseball team followed the same course—exactly.



Above: Mary Harnden Packer, mother of Thurman Arthur, Arminta Bell, and Welcome Earl Edison Packer. Right: Earl Packer's Grandmother Harnden. Both photos by C. Burr Marsh, Fayette, Ohio.

Earl mentioned one game in which their Cherokee manager matched with a "hot-shot bunch of players" in a small town. Betting ran wild. When the other side ran out of money, saddles, bridles, harnesses and other stuff were piled up and the Indian boss matched every item with money. When the game ended he drove off with a wagon crammed full of loot.

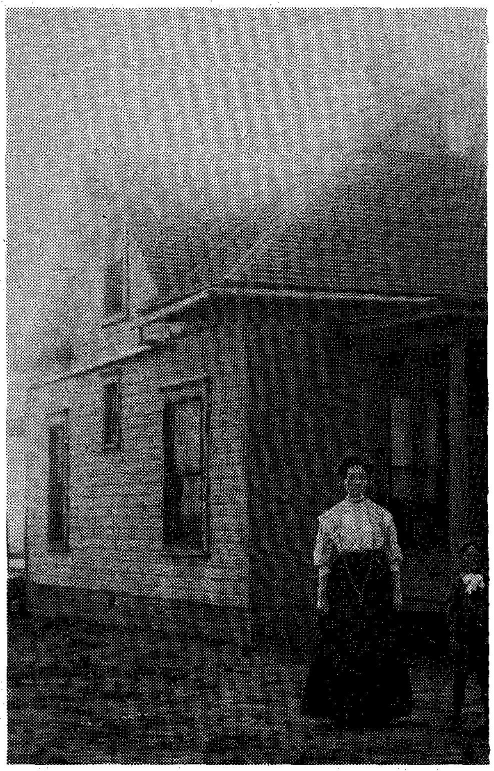
EARL and a pal, John Freeman, liked to visit among the Cheyennes and Arapahoes along the North Canadian River about six miles north of Geary. John spent so much time with them that he learned to speak some of their language, also knew sign lingo, common to Indian Plains Tribes.

One spring when Earl was about twenty-one he hitched a ride with a man in a wagon who was on his way home to Kiowa-Comanche country in southwest Oklahoma Territory. He had been wanting to learn about some other Indian tribes. Having no horse at the time, but a saddle and bridle, he loaded them, a shotgun, plenty of shells and some blankets in the wagon and after eighty miles or so was dropped off near an Indian camp. A young buck saw him trudging toward camp, weighted down with his stuff.

He came to meet Earl, grinned, shook hands and said, "Welcome." Earl recalled, "I don't know why, but I got to callin' him 'Harry'. It seemed to please him. He was a friendly cuss about my age—Comanche I think, though I believe this was a Kiowa camp. Both tribes camped along Elk Creek in many spots. I was never too sure what tribe this camp was—couldn't tell like I could the Cheyennes and Arapahoes. Harry stayed here most of the time, singin' and beatin' on a tom-tom. In all camps along Elk Creek a big deal took place often—consisting of chewin' mescal. (Earl called it *muscal,* which probably meant 'mescal'—a mild drug. I believe it was the same as peyote—from prickly pear cactus, common in the Southwest.)

Earl said, "You put a cactus button in your mouth and started to chew. When it formed a little ball, you swallowed it. Made you feel real happy and anything you thought about, seemed you could do. But if you didn't keep quiet till the feelin' wore off—look out! Once I got on a horse while chewin' the ball and was joltin' along at a lope when I swallowed it. Wow! Somethin' hit me in the guts! I toppled off my horse onto the grass and rolled 'round and 'round. It felt like a ball game was goin' on in my stomach. Afterwhile I was able to mount and ride on.

"First off when I landed at that camp, Harry took me straight to a big, older Indian. He must have been the chief—stuck out his hand, we shook, he grinned and said, "Yo' come.' I followed him. Harry came along.

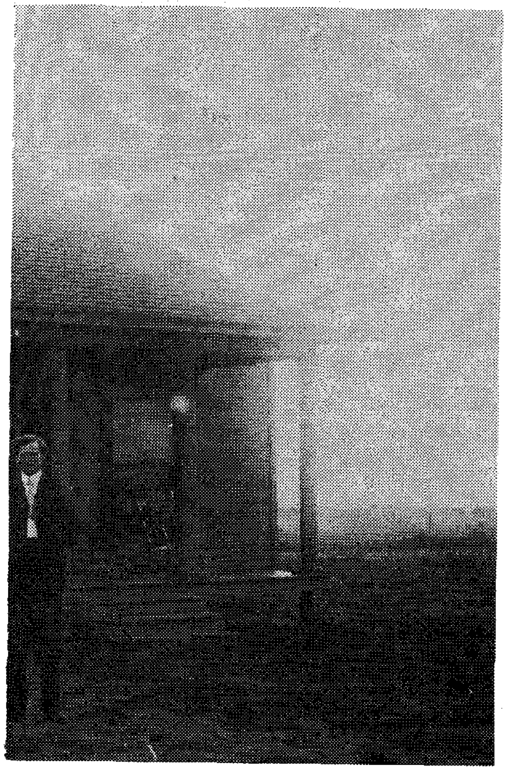


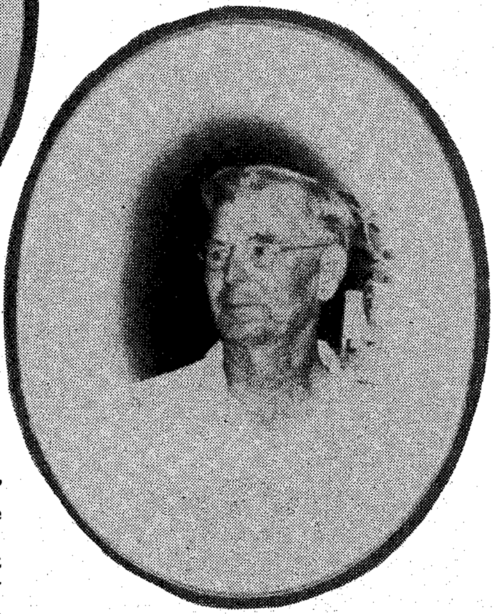
Earl Packer with wife Georgia and son Clair in front of Geary property which was later traded for 160-acre farm out from Old Fort Supply.

"We stopped at a frame house. A big tepee was nearby. I think it belonged to the chief. They called him 'Crowmalty' or some such name. He told me I could live in the house. He liked the tepee better. Harry and I dumped my stuff on the floor. We visited for awhile. The chief said, 'Yo' like shoot quail?' I nodded. He said, 'Good. Many out there,' and pointed to some brush.

"Early next mornin' I was off with shotgun and gunnysack. That Indian was right. I came back with that sack pretty well filled with quail—gave the chief and Harry some—sure tickled 'em. Mine went good with flapjacks. That afternoon Crowmalty came over. We talked a little. He savvied some English—me, no Comanche or Kiowa, but sometimes a sign helped. I knew a few. All those different tribes knew sign language. Crowmalty looked up at a cloud—then at me and said, 'Yo' savvy how build storm house?' I figured he meant a fraid-hole and said, 'Yes.' I'd never dug one but I knew I could. He said, 'Yo' build storm house. Me trade yo'.' I'd noticed a fine herd of wild horses rangin' along Elm Creek. Told the chief I'd swap my work for moccasins, a blanket, beaded belt and a wild pony. He said, 'Yo' break pony?' I said, "You catch—I break.' He grinned, we shook hands and he nodded.

"In a few days John Freeman rode in on his big brown cowhorse. He was wonderin' how I was makin' out and came to see. He shook hands with several Indians. They liked him. All Indians did. John helped me finish the chief's dugout. I'd been doin' some huntin' and loafin' along with diggin.' All finished, Crowmalty brought another Indian over and said, 'He want storm house. We pay same way.' The deal was made; we built it for him. I guess those Indians had met up with a cyclone sometime or other. Between visitin' more camps—huntin' and other things, we built about six more of them.





Georgia and Earl in August 1947.

"One of th' other things was a sweat bath. John and I had vowed we'd try anything we saw the Indians do. That's how I got hooked on muscal chewin'. It was after John arrived. He'd done it with the Cheyennes and Arapahoes and must have been immune to the effects because he was on his horse joltin' along the same time I was and I had to roll off on the prairie and stay for a spell. Didn't do that to him.

"ONE DAY Harry came grinnin' up to us—spoke fair English and said, Yo' like take um bath in lil tepee?' He pointed to a real small one near a spring-fed creek. We agreed. Inside was a circle of naked men sittin' around a bunch of rocks piled in the center. Harry stripped and took a place. So did John and T. A. Fire around these rocks got bigger and hotter. Smoke filled the tepee. Soon it was so stiflin' we could hardly breathe. Stench was awful.

"You could hardly see the man next to you. When I was so stifled I thought I would have to yell 'calf rope' and leave, a buck jumped up and tossed a bucket of water on the fire. Then it *was* terrible —hotter'n hell— and sweat was pourin' off me—and the others. Now I *knew* I was gonna have to take out, but just then those Indians all jumped for the tent flap, ran outside and with wild whoops and big leaps landed in that cold water! John and I was right with 'em. Steamin' hot when I hit it, my breath was sucked away—felt like red-hot needles at first, then I almost froze before I could swim out. But though the day was a bit fallish, I soon felt all nice and warm in that sunshine—sure was exhilaratin'!

"During our stay here we never missed even a shotgun shell. Those Indians liked us. One day a friend from Geary came looking for us. He was on a beautiful big chestnut gelding. I introduced him to Crowmalty who smiled and stuck out his hand to shake. The white man ignored it —just didn't like Indians. Next morning his fine horse was gone. The guy blew his top—cussed a streak then began searching for his horse—never did find him. Finally he gave up lookin' and John took the disgusted fellow, ridin' double on John's horse to the nearest railway station. Later John said that man never could have found his horse because it was moved just ahead of him from camp to camp. It seems Crowmalty didn't like the insult he got from the paleface that day.

"When we figured it was time to go back to Geary I bounced the chief for some pay. He brought out a batch of Indian stuff for us to select what we wanted and said, 'Now my bucks catch ponies. Yo' ride.' I nodded yes. Each day those young bucks chased wild mustangs and each day one was brought to camp snortin', tuggin', buckin' and kickin' at the end of a rope and tied short to a tree overnight. I was to do all the bustin.'

"Every mornin' just before sunup we downed a big batch of flapjacks, then went out to the wild horse where a bunch of Indians waited. Women, kids and all watched from the camp. It was a circus to them. While two husky bucks eared the bronc by bitin' its ears (this pains it so much it makes it stand still), John swung his saddle to the bronc's back, girted him real tight and tied a bed roll

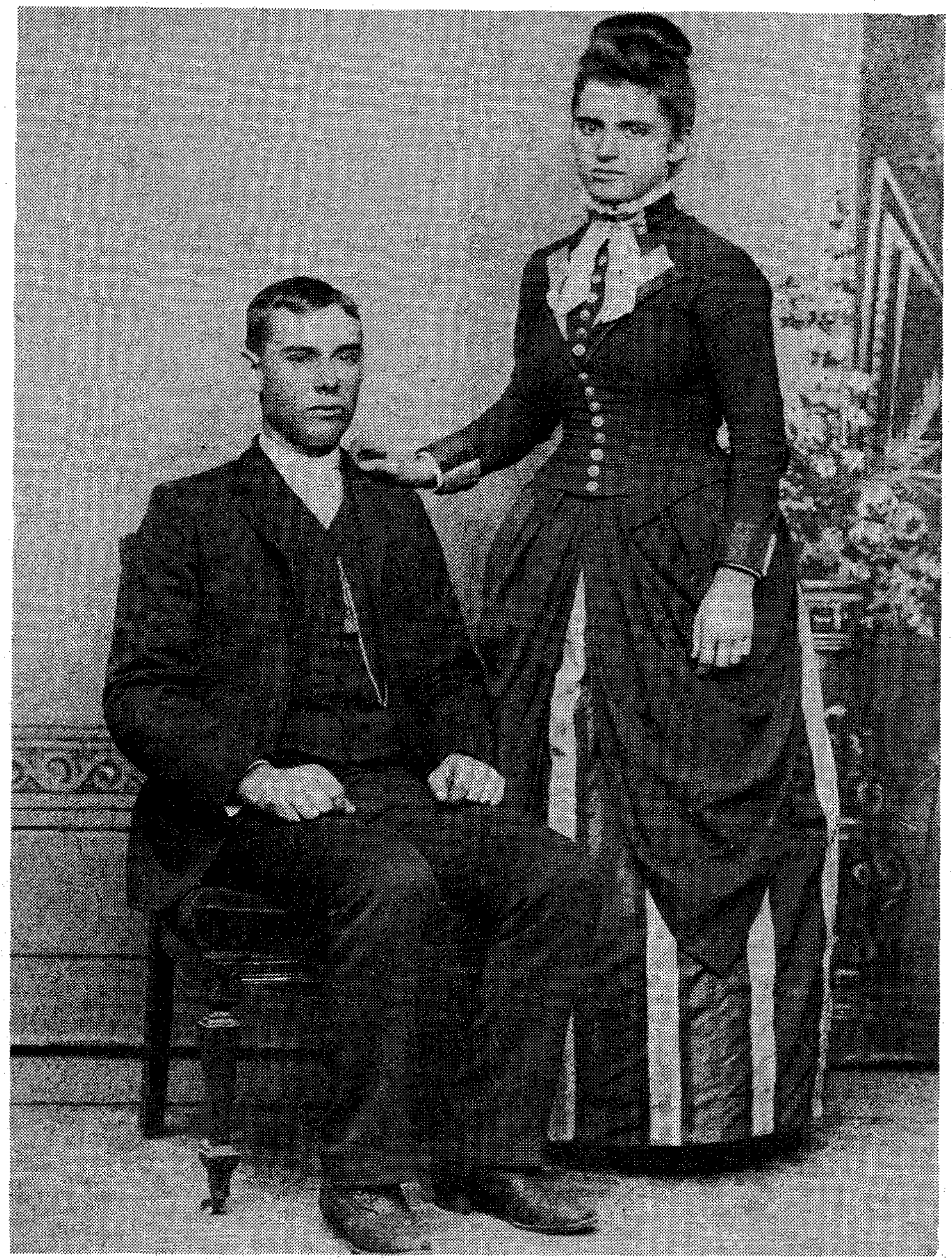


Photo Courtesy Marie Zin George

Harvey and Arminta Zin's wedding picture. Photo by Rawlins of Wichita, Kansas.

against the A-shaped saddletree. Saddles didn't have those buckin' rolls built onto their trees. The bedroll was for protection from gettin' bounced against the saddletree.

"Bein' real active and plenty tough, about the only way I could get dumped was for a bronc to rear up and tip over backwards. If that happened, I stepped off just before he hit the ground. He'd grunt and start to scramble up, but real quick I'd shove a foot in the stirrup and swing aboard as he was gettin' up. Away we'd go till the bronc gave up. No time limit. Sometimes one would stick its nose to the ground, bawl like a cow and buck and buck till it couldn't buck no more.

"One reason I could stay on top was my style of ridin'. Before I mounted, the stirrups were hobbled—that means a short rope, tied to one stirrup, was stretched beneath the mustang's belly and fastened to the other stirrup. While two bucks eared the bronc I climbed aboard and put one foot in the stirrup. That one carried my weight. The other leg—I sat on that thigh, my foot not reachin' the stirrup. Mounted that way and holdin' tight to the saddle-horn with one hand and the halter rope with the other, any active guy that could *ride* oughta be able to bust a rough one.

"Usually, so they say, a stallion is leader of a wild horse herd. Not so with that herd along Elk Creek—which is somewhere in the vicinity of where Lone Wolf now is. This bunch of wild ones was led by a beautiful chestnut-sorrel mare. I'd seen her, long tail and mane streamin' as she skimmed over the ground like a swallow—way ahead of the trailin' herd. How I wanted that mare! Told the chief so. He said 'Good—*if* we can catch.' I noticed he stressed that *if*. Next mornin' we saw why. Some bucks on fast ponies were tryin' to cut her out from the herd. No luck. She ran off from them like their ponies were standin' still. When the horsemen came back on pantin', sweatin' mounts, Crowmalty said, 'Mebbeso think of way.' They must have, because next day horsemen on fresh mounts were ready. Another Indian took a long rope, tied one end to a big limb of a cottonwood—a limb that stretched above and across a shallow stream. These Indians had short ropes stuck in their belts.

"Soon all eyes of the camp were glued to a flying chestnut-sorrel far ahead of but surely bein' headed toward the stream crossing by pursuing horsemen. The bucks with short ropes crouched in bushes bordering both sides of the stream. John and I hid at one side. There she came, nostrils red and flarin'—hoofs beatin' a tattoo! The trail downslope was gradual comin' into the stream, then steepened a bit as it came out on the other side. Like a runaway locomotive the mare hit the stream, her head shootin' through the noose. She thundered across and was jerked into the air by her momentum, swingin' back like a pendulum.

"She crashed down, momentarily stunned. Bucks with piggin' ropes rushed out, tied her feet and put another lariat rope around her neck, tyin' it so it wouldn't tighten. John mounted his big bay which had been tied nearby in bushes. The other end of the lariat was tied to his saddle horn. He came in fast, takin' up rope slack. By now the dazed mare was recoverin' and staggerin' to her feet but John's horse was right at her side. She bucked some as he began pullin' her toward a tree. By the time they had reached it she was bawlin' and buckin' like mad. With my help and that of several Indians we got her snubbed close to the tree to stay overnight. Our plan was to leave early next mornin'. From our work on dugouts we had several horses and a lot of Indian goods.

"At early dawn we downed our flapjacks, then went out to load up and leave. John, on his big horse, was sure totin' a lot of stuff. Indian blankets, moccasins, beaded belts, and bridles were tied on the saddle here and there—shotgun shells in sacks tied to the saddle, guns in his arms and hands which were tryin' to hold bridle reins. Each bronc was tied nose to tail to another one and the lead one to a rope stretchin' to John's saddle-horn. I tied a long rope to my halter rope, just in case I got dumped—figurin' we'd then have a chance to catch the mare again because at the end of this rope was tied a short limb meant to catch in brush on a draggin' rope.

"COILIN' this one up, I mounted as two bucks bit the beautiful ears of my prized mare. The pain made her stay put till I got all set. When I said, 'Ready,' they let her go—and did she go! With that first jump she shot up like a skyrocket. Ol' Sol was just toppin' a ridge to the east. Seemed that mare never would come down, but when she did my thigh took a heckuva jolt. Down went her head. She tried everything I'd ever had or seen broncs do—all rolled up in this one package of dynamite. She bawled, pitched, twisted, swapped ends,

(Continued on page 34)

PROYECTO DE GUERRA

It set a price on life according to the color and texture of human hair!

BY NORMAN L. WILSON, JR.

Photo Courtesy Author

IN New Mexico territory, early in the last century, men sought their fortunes in such commodities as furs, silver or gold. However, in 1837 Mexican officials in Chihuahua and Sonora passed laws adding another valuable commodity—Indians.

Apaches didn't mind trappers and hunters on their lands. Such fortune seekers were not permanent. Miners presented a different problem. These people came to stay. When the Apaches did what they could to make it clear that miners were not welcome, new laws were directed against the Indians.

Under the 1837 *Proyecto de Guerra* or War Project, the Mexican Government would now pay 100 *pesos* for each dead adult male Apache—as evidenced by turning in his scalp. The scalp of a female Apache was worth 50 *pesos,* and that of Apache children 25 *pesos.*

Such proclamations are thought to bring out the greed in people, and in no time at all it became obvious that this was the case. Scalp hunters even killed Mexicans, telling authorities that their scalps had belonged to Indians. Some men made as much as $100,000 by scalp hunting. James Johnson had that ambition also.

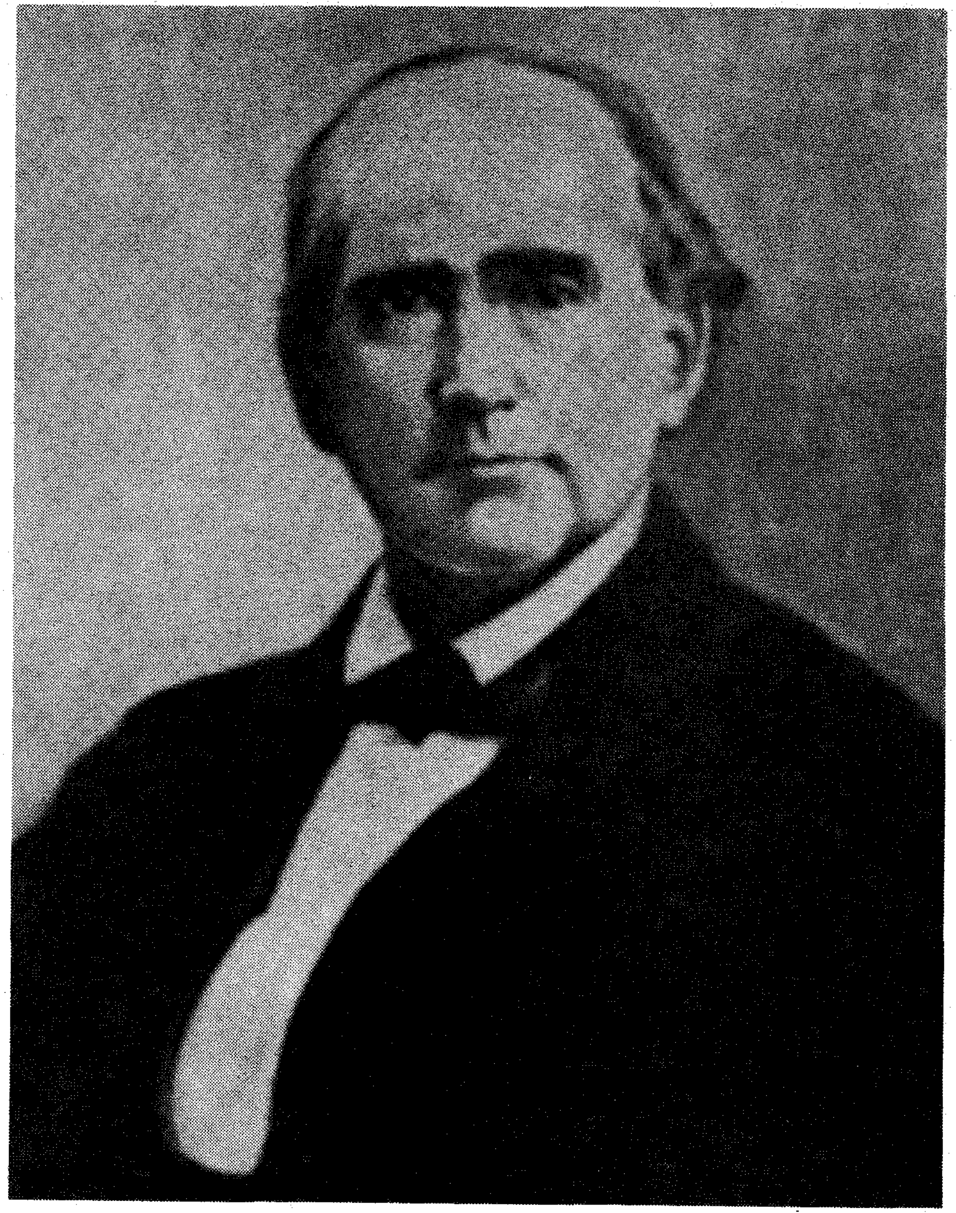
Johnson operated a trading post in Oposura. On April 22, 1837, Johnson's scheme to get rich was to become a reality. At this time Juan Jose Compo was chief of the Mimbreno Apaches. Juan Jose was a friend of Johnson. He and his people were frequent visitors to Oposura and Johnson's trading post. It was natural then for Johnson to invite Juan Jose to the village, and on one of Juan Jose's visits Johnson set the stage.

"My friends Gleason and Eames want to have a fiesta. We would like for you and your families to come. After the fiesta we will have sacks of *pinole* for your families to take back with them."

On the day arranged, Juan Jose and most of the Apaches arrived with their families to spend the day at Johnson's fiesta. Johnson kept his word. Food and drink were abundant. There was no hint of what was to come. At the end of the day Johnson invited the gathering to the pile of sacks of *pinole.* Concealed near the stack was a small cannon. As the Indians approached, Johnson touched his lighted cigar to its fuse.

Chains, nails, and slugs which had been loaded into the barrel of the cannon exploded, scattering into the approaching crowd. Bodies were strewn all over the blood-paved street. Shocked and bewildered, the Indians staggered, crawled, and ran in all directions, driven by the instinct to survive. But Juan Jose was not to escape. During the turmoil and confusion Gleason drew his pistol and fired. Wounded, but not dead, Juan Jose drew his knife and angrily leaped on Gleason. A second shot rang out. Johnson did not miss. The leadership of Juan Jose had come to an end.

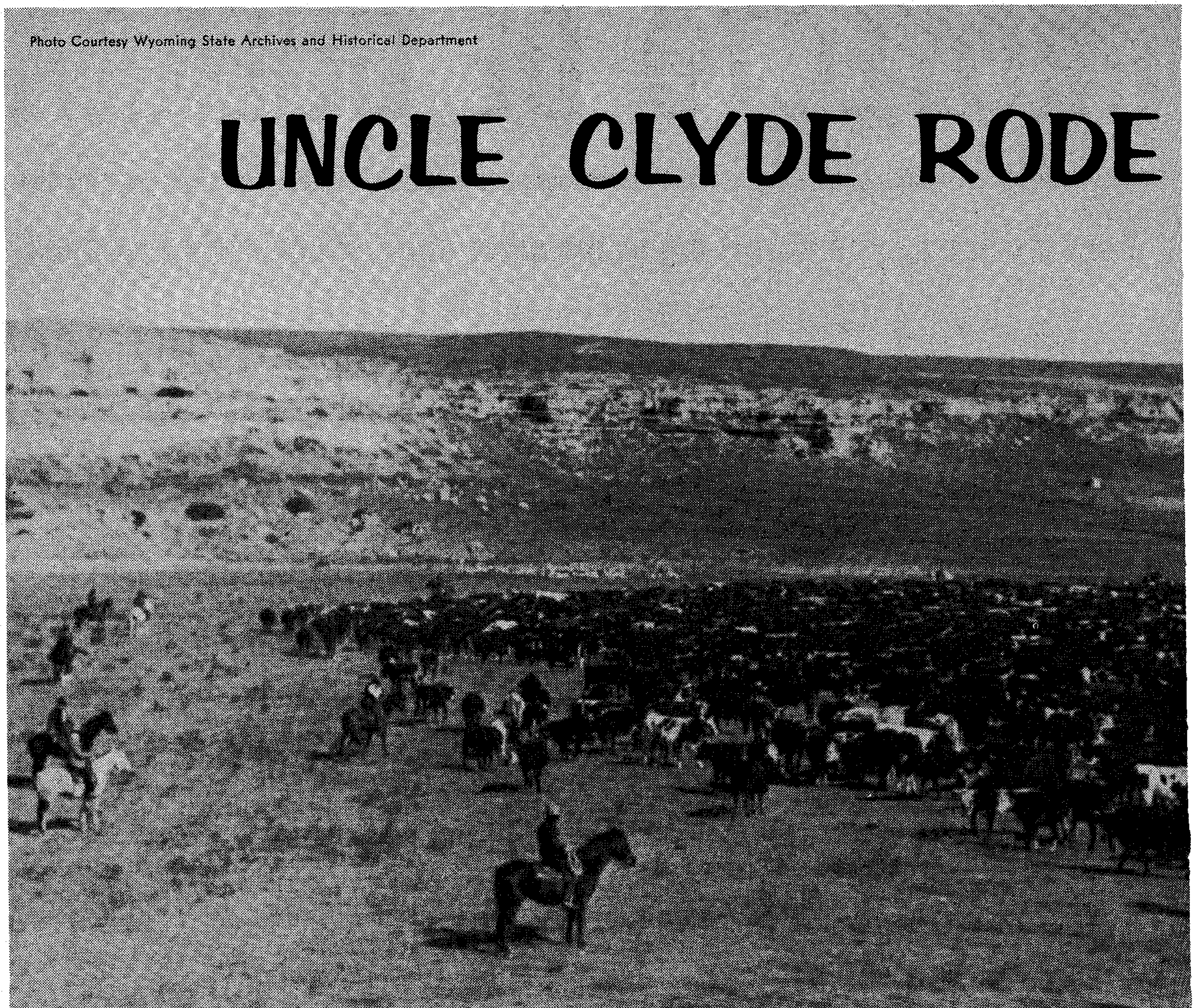
(*Continued on page 39*)



Benjamin D. Wilson, mayor of Los Angeles from 1851-1852.

Photo Courtesy Wyoming State Archives and Historical Department

UNCLE CLYDE RODE



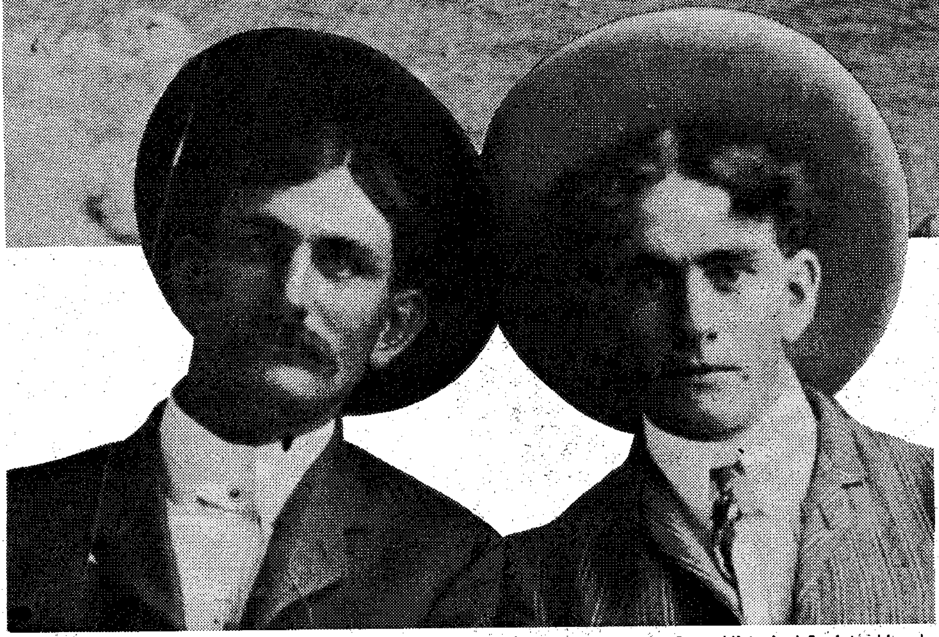


Photo Courtesy Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln

Top: Rounding up cattle to start a drive. Above: The man with the mustache was identified as the son of an early Minatare, Nebraska area rancher; the man on the right is Clyde Lawyer.

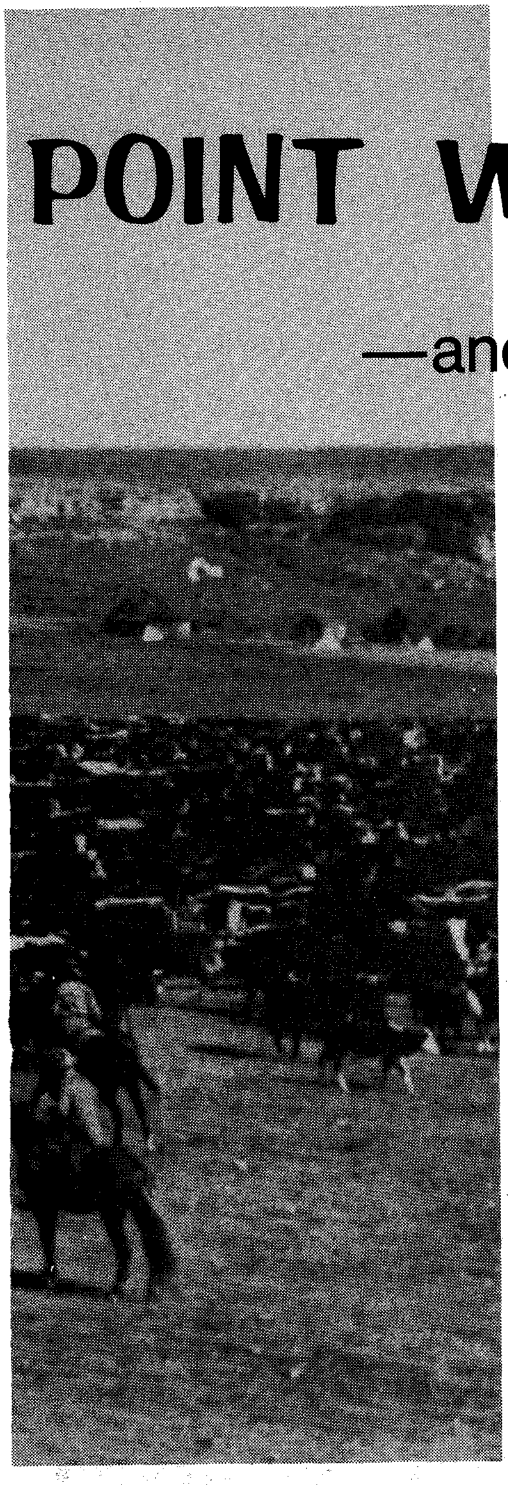
BY WALT LAWYER
submitted by
D. PARKER SKOLD

Photos Courtesy Author

CLYDE LAWYER, my fifteen-year-old uncle, a top bronco buster, lived with us for two years in the late 1890s and worked for my dad on our ranch near Gering, Nebraska. I was a hero-worshipping kid then and I just about lived in the shadow of Clyde's broad-brimmed cowboy hat. When he left I hated to see him go, but I took a lot of pride in knowing his partner on the trail was another

POINT WITH TOM HORN

—and it was during this drive he lost all ambition to be a fast gun!



top-notch cowboy. That cowboy's name was Tom Horn.

I can still see Tom Horn, the way he looked then, although it's been over seventy-six years. Horn stood over six feet tall, was genial, and had smiling blue eyes and a real interest in kids. That's one reason I remember him so well.

He'd ridden up to our ranch on point with a big trail herd of 4,000 Longhorns but I guess what really pinned Tom Horn in my mind was that when the trail herd pulled out, my young uncle rode out with it—Clyde on one point; Tom Horn on the other.

This was the spring of '98. At that time my dad, Sam Lawyer, owned a big horse ranch between the North Platte River and the Wild Cat Hills in western Nebraska. Saddle horses were in big demand and I had the idea that Clyde would always stay with us. Like most of the Lawyers he was a born horseman, small, quick and wiry. Young as he was, he was the top bronc-stomper on the ranch and Dad always said, "Clyde's one of the best." Of course, that's the reason Clyde got the chance to ride out with that trail herd.

None of us knew anything about Tom Horn at that time. News occasionally drifted into our ranges from other parts of the country but we weren't a nosy bunch. If Dad had known anything about Tom Horn's past he might have tried to stop his kid brother and it couldn't have been long on the drive before the rest of the cowboys began to throw out hints about it. But by that time it was too late.

Anyway, I don't think anyone could have held Clyde back. The West was still pretty much open territory and the stories of the past were still fresh—Jesse James, the Dalton boys, and others. I think Clyde caught what you might call "gun fever." I think he had an idea that he could be a faster gun than any of them. I don't believe he ever had any intention of robbing banks but he wanted to be the one who could challenge a hardcase—until he saw Tom Horn in action. Clyde had to go for his gun more than once in his cattle punching in Wyoming's Powder River country, he told me later, but I don't think he ever considered himself in the same class with Tom Horn. Clyde described Tom Horn as cool, fast and deadly.

For myself, I've heard many stories about the fast guns and, while Clyde was not an old-timer or an Indian fighter, he was what I remember as a sure shot. When he first started riding for Dad I used to tag along behind him on my pony and he always carried a six-gun. I think all his wages went for ammunition so he was bound to get good. He rarely missed his target and was always practicing the art of shooting from the hip—just waiting for a chance to ride into the "real" West.

WHEN Clyde's chance came to go to Wyoming with this trail herd he jumped at it. He jingled out ahead of the herd like he was riding into history. In a way you might say that he actually was, because that cattle drive was probably the last one of any size to trail out of Texas, taking the old Western Trail through Nebraska and on into Wyoming.

Some of that trail herd of 4,000 head had come out of Old Mexico. And a few of the cowboys, too, including Tom Horn. It's a well known fact that most of those boys weren't down there for their health. And that's when Tom Horn signed on with Wallace Merchant, the boss of the trail herd I'm telling you about. Tom Horn stayed with the herd until it got to a small outpost in Wyoming known as Sundance.

Though Sundance was quite a way from our ranch, the worst part of the drive was over by the time Clyde joined up with it—at least as far as the cattle were concerned. It had been a long drive when I'd spotted the dust cloud that hung over the herd as it approached Dad's horse ranch. I distinctly remember watching that long string of cattle plod by. They were strung out for miles and it took hours for the entire herd to pass one point. Mr. Merchant, the trail boss, told Dad it had been a long drive with many days on the trail, sometimes poor feed and no water. The cowboys with the wagon looked like a mixed breed, some Spanish, some Mex, and maybe some drifters from the old Civil War days. They were as tough as they come and Clyde told me admiringly that their law was usually settled by the gun. It was hard not to notice the matched pistols worn by Tom Horn.

Dad was an old friend of Wallace Merchant. Dad called him "Bugs" and had known him since they both worked for the Ogalala Cattle Company. Whenever Bugs went through our part of the country he always stopped for a visit. This time he wanted to let the herd lay over for a few days and fatten up on a nearby range where the feed was good and the water plentiful. Also the drive was in need of fresh horses.

The saddle horses with this drive were of about every type there was and most of them rode down to skin and bones with their backs covered with saddle sores. Bugs got the pick of the colts Clyde had broke out, and since Clyde was Dad's top bronc-stomper he got well acquainted with the trail boss. Before the herd pulled out about a week later, Bugs had bought ten colts and Clyde had signed on with the drive. Well, Dad gave Clyde a couple more colts and early one morning the herd started on again. I watched them leave.

Bugs Merchant, the chuckwagon and, of course, the bedwagon pulled out in the lead, then Tom Horn and Clyde on point, followed by the Longhorns with the rest of the cowboys riding flank, except for the poor devils who wound up on drag, the dirtiest, dustiest job on a cattle drive.

Clyde said he was lucky. Bugs always kept him on point and he never had to work on the drag. Of course he didn't know this would be the case when they pulled out, but he sure didn't share my blue feeling anyway. I watched Clyde jingle past, waving at me with a delighted grin. I've wondered since if he'd have been so happy if he'd known there'd be trouble before the drive was over, but I guess not because he didn't voice any regret about having joined up when I asked him about it, years later.

CLYDE said they'd headed almost due west from our ranch. The herd turned north again after they crossed the Wyoming border, sort of making their own trail between the old Western Trail and the Cheyenne-Deadwood stage road. Mr. Merchant's plan was to turn west again just before the herd reached Sundance, Wyoming.

The drive plodded along, as quiet as a Sunday School picnic, until they reached the turning point. Tom Horn and Clyde scouted ahead and found good pasture with plentiful water so that when the cattle bedded down for the night, two boys could handle them. However those two boys stood guard for only two hours and then rode in and called out another two. That was the routine. Of course, Clyde remembered a couple of times when he'd been jumped out in the night if it seemed that the cattle might get out of hand, but nothing came of it. That meant that with the exception of the nighthawk who rode herd on the horses all night and drove the bedwagon when the wagons pulled out in the morning, the rest of the hands hung around the chuckwagon and fire to talk.

Most of the men were pretty closemouthed about their own lives but there were always stories about previous drives to talk about. Of course these stories were never buried or forgotten and gradually Clyde began to hear whispers and rumors about the past of Tom Horn. Earlier he had helped to bring peace and law to the West but as someone put it, "After Tom Horn tamed the West he couldn't stand it anymore." Clyde always claimed there was more to it than that. He said Tom Horn had a cold, inhuman streak in him and would stop at nothing to reach his goal. And that's the way Horn acted the last morning he and Clyde rode together on point.

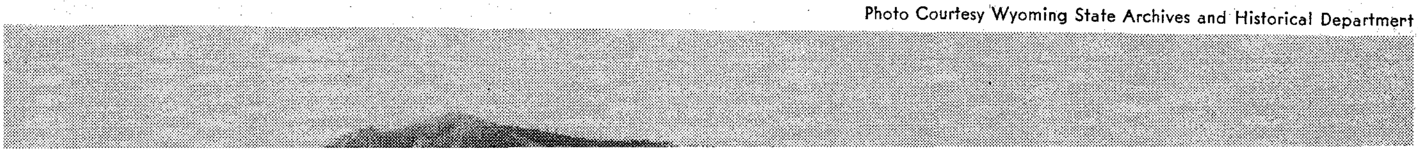
As I said, just before the herd reached Sundance, Wyoming, Bugs Merchant aimed to turn west again. Bugs warned the men about a family there who went by the name of Covington who, it was said, might make trouble for them. Then Bugs particularly gave Tom Horn orders to avoid any trouble, if he could. Naturally Clyde didn't have any say in what they'd do but he didn't figure Tom Horn to avoid anything, especially when he heard there were three Covington brothers who were feared by anyone who trespassed over what they called their holdings. These so-called holdings took in most of that part of Wyoming. Besides, it was no secret that one of the Covington boys was a fast man with a gun. It was rumored that he had several dead men to his credit. Clyde admitted to me later that he found himself wondering a lot about those dead men because the trail herd had to pass right through the Covington territory.

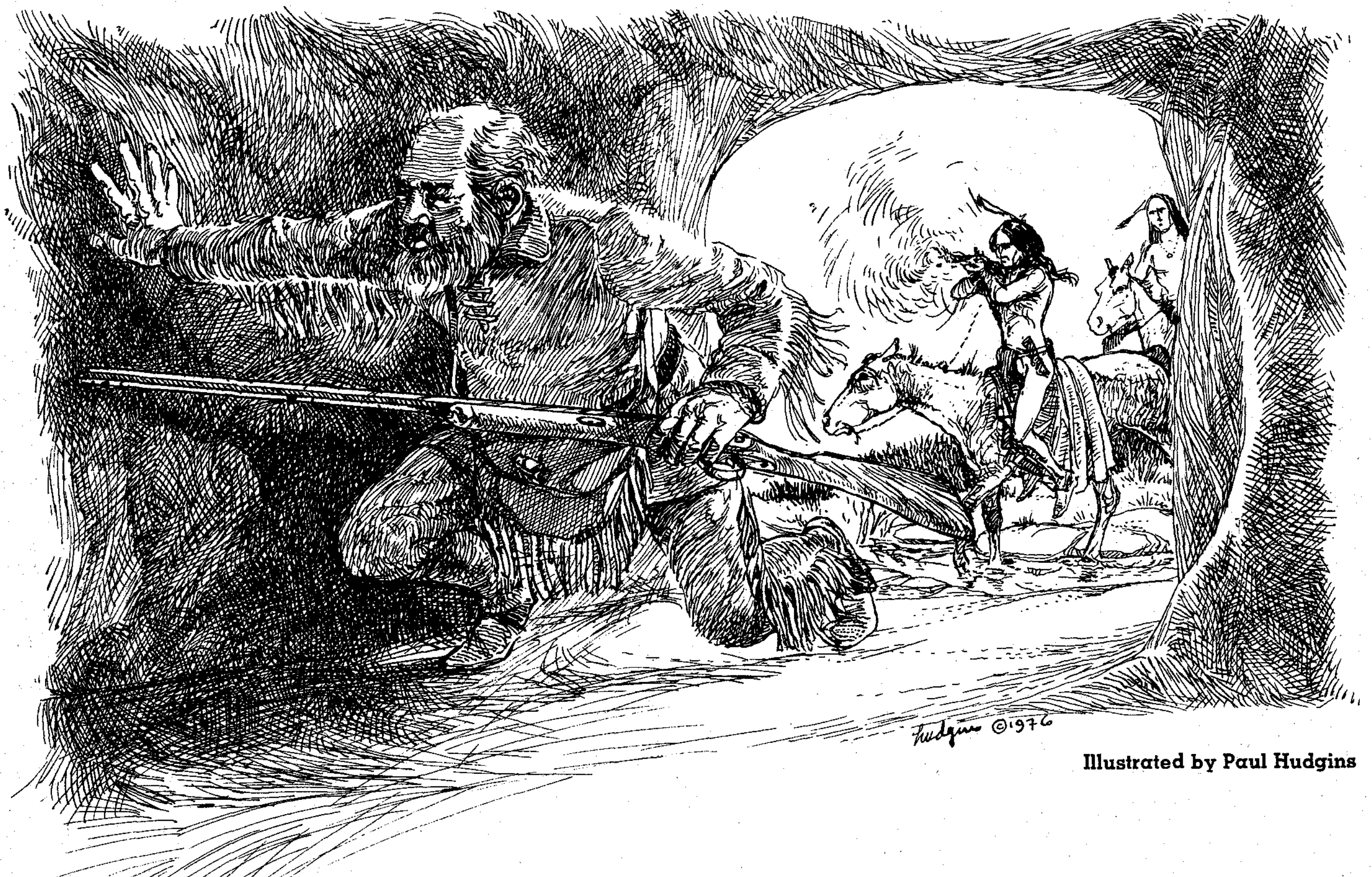
Clyde and Tom Horn had just topped a grassy knoll near Sundance when two of the Covington boys rode up and ordered them to turn back the herd. Of course, no one was going to stop a drive like this. From the story I heard from Clyde it seemed like Tom Horn told these boys to move back, the herd was going

(Continued on page 26)

An early photo of Sundance, Wyoming.

Photo Courtesy Wyoming State Archives and Historical Department





Illustrated by Paul Hudgins

The classic story of a one man stand-off...

skunk johnson's magnificent cave

BY GENE KIVETT

SKUNK JOHNSON'S cave was known to most every rancher and freighter in southwestern Kansas in the 1880s. In that flat, often wind-swept country where houses and buildings of any kind were few and widely separated, the cave served as a shelter to men caught in storms. It is said that during one hard blizzard fifteen freighters holed up in the cave at the same time.

The cave was man-made—carefully dug, carved and scraped out of clay by a fur trapper named Johnson. Not only did the cave serve as a comfortable home for Johnson, it also was a fortress against Indian attacks.

Johnson showed up in Pratt County in the 1870s. Although the land that comprised the county had been purchased from the Indians, they still hunted game in that sparsely settled country and still killed and scalped white men if they got a chance. When Johnson told settlers in the area of the present-day city of Pratt that he intended to trap the outlying country, he was warned that he was likely to lose his hair.

Johnson was a courageous, if foolhardy, man. He ignored the warnings and set about looking for a location to dig a cave that would make a good home and at the same time be easily defended. He found what he was looking for near the headwaters of the Ninnescah River: a large cliff of yellow clay and gypsum that overlooked a small creek.

Johnson set to work digging a tunnel three feet wide and four feet high into the cliff. He built the tunnel in a curve. After digging the winding passage several yards in length, he expanded his burrowing to his right and left and straight up and proceeded to carve out a large room. He shoveled and scraped with great care, so that the floor and ceiling were smooth and level and the walls plumb.

While carving the floor and walls, he left solid blocks of clay which he later sculptured into a table and three benches. In one wall he dug out a fireplace, and topped it with a handy mantle. The fireplace flue was a round hole that extended straight up through the earth to the top of the cliff. He also dug a water well in a corner of the room. When everything was finished, the trapper had a comfortable wilderness home that was nearly fool-proof against Indian attack.

Besides trapping, Johnson had a little side-line business. He rendered oil from the fat of skunks and sold it to the settlers for medicinal purposes.

FOR several years Johnson lived in the cave and ran his trap line and peddled skunk oil before he had a serious run-in with Indians. Then one spring day when the season was over and he was gathering up his traps along the creek not far from his cave, he looked up to see a band of Indian hunters coming his way. He saw at once that the redskins had spotted him.

Quickly Johnson jumped into the creek and, stooping low, ran down the stream for several yards, then dived headfirst into a large patch of cattails that grew along the banks. As he lay

(*Continued on next page*)

Skunk Johnson's Magnificent Cave

(Continued from page 25)

there in concealment, breathing hard, he could hear the hoofbeats of the Indian ponies coming closer and could hear their riders shouting excitedly to each other. He knew they suspected where he was hiding and would probably find him. His only chance of escape, he decided, was to make a run for his cave, over a hundred yards away.

In the next instant he sprang from the cattail patch and dashed with all his speed for the cave. The Indians instantly spotted the sprinting, buckskin-clad figure and blasted away at him with their rifles. Fate was kind to Johnson, and he ducked unharmed into the tunnel of his underground home.

The Indians reached the tunnel, dismounted and peered into the entrance. One large buck, armed with a rifle in one hand and a bowie knife in the other, crept cautiously into the tunnel and out of sight of his companions.

Johnson had built the winding tunnel for just such a contingency. He was waiting around a dark bend, armed with a chopping axe, and when the big Indian crept within striking range Johnson split his skull with one mighty blow. The sound of the axe against the Indian's head made a loud popping sound, like that of a green pumpkin being squashed.

Outside the tunnel, the other Indians heard the sound and surmised what had happened. Two of them, stooping side by side, quickly slithered into the passage, grabbed their dead companion by the heels and yanked him outside.

Now the Indians, enraged by this turn of events, began to scream obscenities into the entrance of the tunnel.

A chief then spoke up, quietly but with authority, and calmed down his angry companions. During a brief powwow, the Indians decided that the only way to get the trapper out into the open was to smoke him out. A fire was started inside the tunnel entrance and heaped with green, newly-leafed willow limbs. Grey, acrid smoke rolled through the tunnel and into the cave, but it drifted harmlessly over Johnson into the fireplace and out through the fireplace flue.

When a startled buck spotted smoke pouring out of a hole on top of the cliff he profanely yelled out his discovery and he, with others, clambered to the top of the ledge and stuffed up the flue with grass and weeds.

Johnson's luck, however, was still holding good. Now the smoke, instead of entering farther into the tunnel and into the cave, reversed its course and wafted out of the tunnel into the open air.

The Indians proceeded to hold another council. Their quarry, they agreed, was holed up as safely from the vengeance of their bullets as a gopher from the talons of a hawk. The only thing to do, they decided, was to hold siege at the tunnel entrance until the trapper was starved out and shot down in his tracks.

What followed was a cat-and-mouse game of keeping a close watch on the cave. Day and night two or more Indians kept an eye on the tunnel entrance, rifles in hand. They also kept a lookout on top of the cliff, lest the trapper try to crawl up the fireplace flue and make his escape. Ten days passed.

Meanwhile, in the cave, Johnson had a big problem. With the trapping season about over, he had, in the first place, been running low on supplies. Now, completely out of food and severely gnawed with hunger pangs, he began to tap the skunk oil he had stored in the cave. Every day, for three days, he drank about a pint of the odoriferous fluid.

"It tasted like hell," he said later, "but at least it was nourishment!"

Johnson's amazing good luck still held. The Indians finally gave up the siege and left the country; not without, quite probably, a certain admiration for the man who had defied all their efforts to dislodge him from his underground home.

When the trapper reached the settlements and told his story he was nicknamed "Skunk," and was called by that name as long as he lived in the area.

Reportedly Johnson finally left Pratt County, headed west, and was never heard of again. Several years ago part of the roof of his cave fell in. It is said that a government agency has plans to repair the cave and designate it as a monument to honor the craftsmanship and resourcefulness of the indomitable Skunk Johnson.

Uncle Clyde Rode Point With Tom Horn

(Continued from page 24)

through. That made the Covingtons mad and the fast gun of the boys made his play. He'd probably never met up with a real fast gun before, because Clyde said Tom Horn shot the fellow dead before he ever elevated his gun and also got the drop on the other brother. Tom Horn told him to take his brother's body home and come back with the rest of the Covington clan—if he hadn't had enough.

This was the first time Clyde had witnessed real gunplay and he'd had enough. He said he had sure hoped they wouldn't come back.

Of course, the Covingtons didn't and the herd went through. However old Bugs Merchant didn't approve of killings and Clyde said Bugs and Tom Horn had a few words. Tom Horn left the outfit.

After Horn left, Bugs put another man on point with Clyde. This man went by the name of Mexican Joe. Mexican Joe wasn't a Mexican but he'd come out of Old Mexico to join the trail herd. Clyde said Mexican Joe was a good man with cattle and the herd continued on up into Gillette, Wyoming where Bugs had been contacted by an English outfit for the sale of this bunch of cattle.

According to the history books this was the time Tom Horn went on to join up with the U. S. Army in the Spanish-American War. He made a good record there but afterwards he just couldn't settle down. He hired himself out to the Wyoming cattle interests as a "regulator" where, as everyone knows, he was hanged for the alleged murder of fourteen-year-old Willie Nickell, son of a man who ran sheep.

Oddly enough, Tom Horn's friends still insisted that he was kind, generous and law-abiding like the side of him I'd seen when he'd stayed at Dad's ranch. Tom Horn has been called an enigma but I think Clyde said it better when he told me, "I didn't like Tom Horn but it's a shame he lived to be hanged when he'd had so many chances to die a hero."

I guess you might say it was Clyde Lawyer who died a hero's death although it wasn't until many years later. Clyde made good in Wyoming and stayed there until he joined up with the army in World War I. The army sent Clyde to France where he was assigned to leading detachments of ammunition wagons pulled by six-mule teams to the front. The Germans were just beginning to use gas then and Clyde was gassed before he got away. He managed to make it back to Buffalo, Wyoming but he soon had to ask for a bed in the army hospital at Hot Springs, South Dakota, where he died. That was trail's end for Clyde Lawyer.

Tom Horn braiding a rope while waiting for trial.

Photo Courtesy Wyoming State Archives and Historical Department

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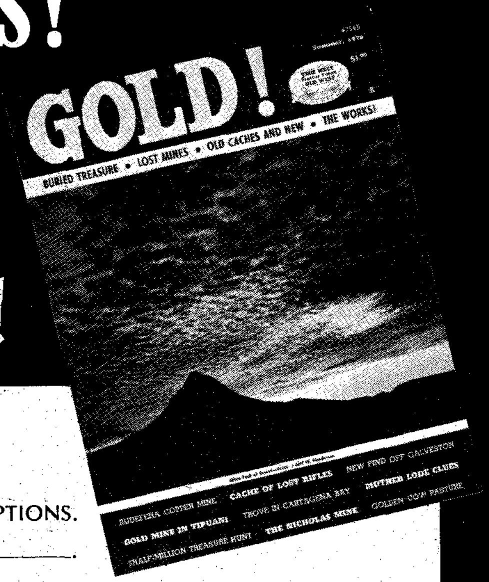
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The Fightin'est Cow

(Continued from page 9)

made it easier to hold one and you had more time to get away from their sharp horns.

About 1915 Dud VanBuskirk had shipped 200 head of yearling heifers from Old Mexico to Canon City, Colorado. This is rough country, lots of piñon trees and oak brush, steep hillsides with a few parks where a cowboy could catch a calf pretty easy, but doing this sure makes them wild.

MEXICO cattle were just naturally wild. I remember the next summer we had about 100 cattle rounded up. We were branding the calves and one of these Mexico heifers would not stay in the bunch. We were in a big flat. This heifer would break out and a cowboy would run his horse as fast as he could to circle her back into the bunch.

That heifer would just worm her way around till she got on the other side of the bunch of cattle and away she would go. She did this several times, pretty quick. Dud VanBuskirk finally just caught her and we tied her down till we got through branding and let all the cattle go.

As long as we had roundups we branded the biggest part of the calves on them, but about 1922 cattle prices hit bottom and a lot of ranchers went broke or sold their cattle. Dud VanBuskirk and I were the only ones running cattle on our range, so we had to brand a big part of our calves out on the range. This made them wilder than they ever were before. It seemed most of the Mexico cows had a calf about every summer. They ran on the open range all year long. We never fed them. In the summer they ran in the open parks most of the time; in winter they stayed in the rough hills.

These wild cattle were a nuisance, took a lot of time and were hard on horseflesh. We wanted to get rid of them. It was bad enough to brand the calves on the tamer cattle. When you found them you could hold them up against a bank and one man would catch one at a time (two or three calves), tie each one down, then we would build a fire and brand them. If there was a corral anywhere near we took the cattle there, but a lot of our range was miles from any corral or pen. When I was riding by myself I often branded two calves by one fire, catching one, tying it down, get back on my horse, circle the other cow and calf as near to the one I had tied down as I could, then catch and tie it down. We carried copper rings to do this branding on the open range and never lacked wood to make a fire. Doing this took good, long-winded, sure-footed horses and a pretty good cowboy.

WHAT I want to tell about is one certain cow that was the wildest, runningest, fightingest, toughest cow I ever saw.

The first time I ever noticed her was on 8-Mile Mountain. She had a good-sized unbranded calf, her first one I guess. We were in fairly open country.

I took my rope down to catch the calf. When I got pretty close and was running as fast as we could go she turned back and tried to horn my horse. This surprised me; a cow usually does not do this till they are winded or cornered. I had to get out of her way, but after a bit I did catch her calf and branded it.

I didn't see her again till the next winter when Harve Caywood started working for Dud VanBuskirk and we became partners in 1923. A few years after we had gone into partnership we gathered and sold 200 cows and calves to Bill Smith. Ray Giem had helped me gather these in 1925 and 1926. About half of these were wild cattle that we tied up and led in.

Harve had worked with wild cattle all his life; he knew how to tie them up and he was a good tracker. I never saw a better hand after wild cattle. I got him to help me that winter. One day Harve and I were on the side of 8-Mile Mountain and he started up a little bunch of cattle. I was waiting near a trail for them to come by me.

I was up a steep hill about 100 yards from the trail. This cow came by and when she saw me she just turned up the hill wanting to hook my horse. I decided we just as well take her on. That was a real brushy steep hill and we always

(Continued on page 30)

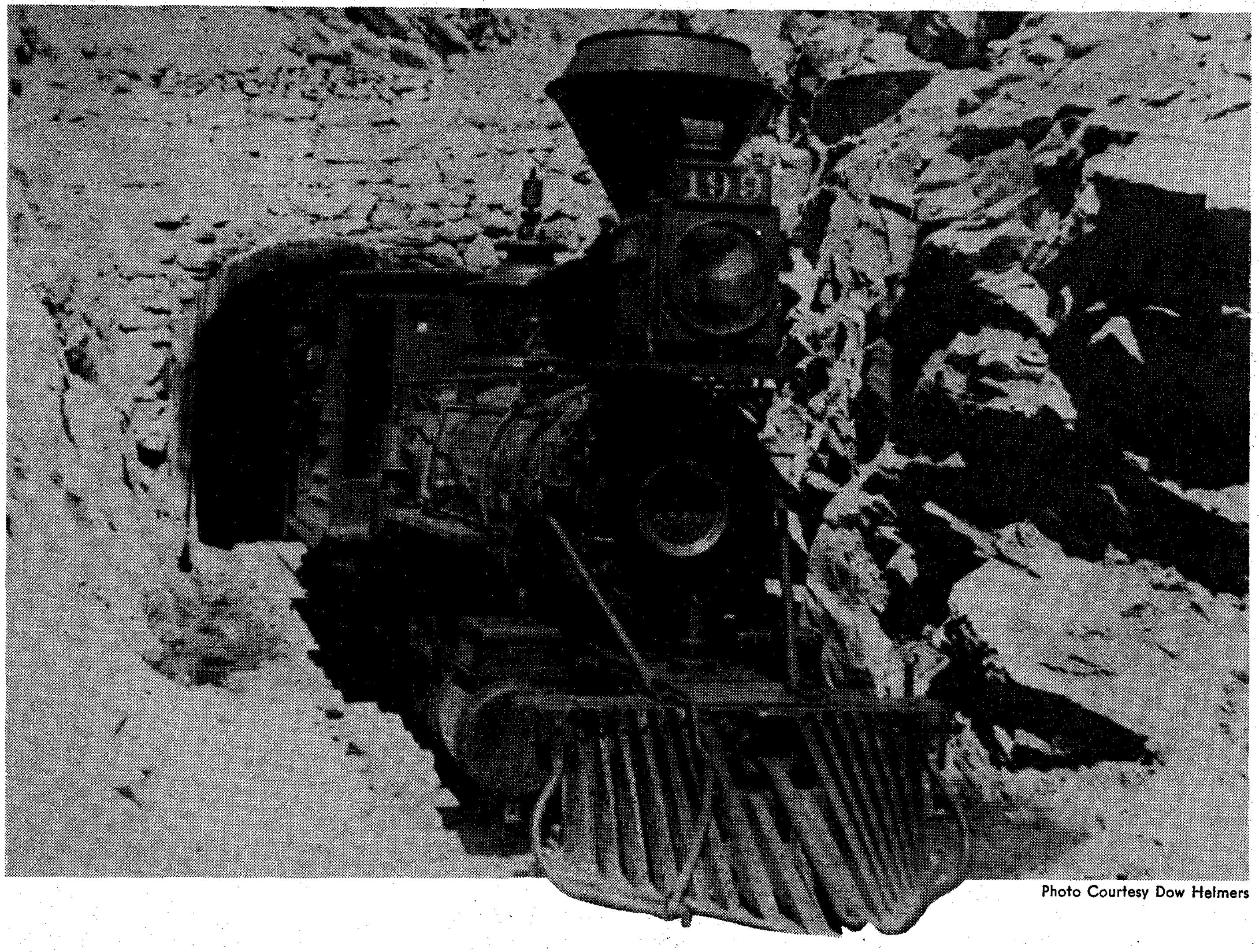


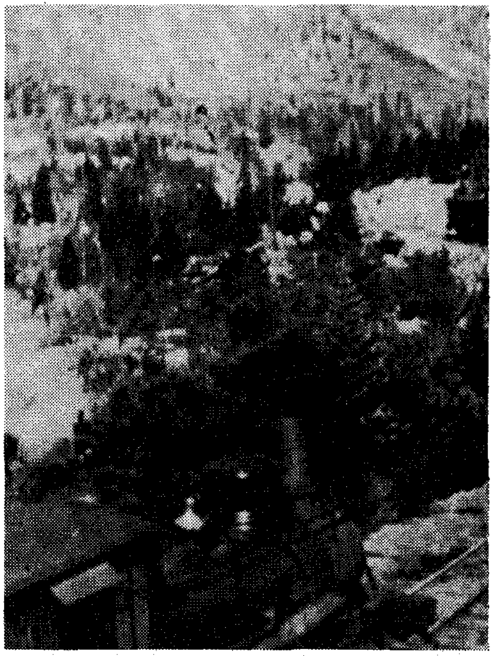
Photo Courtesy Dow Helmers

THE SOUTH PARK NARROW

—a treacherous stretch of rails that you could slide on a while before you jumped the track and hurtled down the mountain

BY BERT RENCK submitted by HANK GIVENS

Photos Courtesy Author



Author's Note: Bert Renck, eighty-five, a native of St. Louis, Missouri, got into railroading in Colorado Springs, Colorado in 1906 with the Santa Fe. He fired Engine No. 56 for Engineer Al Hebert on the Groceryman's Picnic on the Denver Boulder & Western. In the early days grocerystore owners and their families chartered a train for an all-day picnic. This one was in Boulder Canyon.

In 1909 Renck went to work as a fireman on the Denver South Park & Pacific which was abandoned in 1910, then worked for the Santa Fe until 1914.

One time back in 1911 Renck left Denver on a red ball freight at 6:30 p.m. and arrived in Palmer Lake over the tough grade at 9:40 p.m. In that time he had shovelled eighteen tons of coal into Engine No. 803.

He also made several trips between Denver and Colorado Springs via eastern Colorado on the Colorado & Southern, nicknamed "The Polly-Wog" because it was a short line.

Renck quit railroading when he filed a claim on a homestead near Rush, Colorado and the law read that he had to live on the property. On the farm he raised a little bit of everything, and at one time he also ran a store at Hall's Station with his brother, R. R. Renck. Presently he lives on the farm with his son George, raises Hereford cattle, and puts up hay on the old Altman Ranch.

IF A CREW of the Denver South Park & Pacific Railroad, Gunnison Division, didn't have a wreck or get off the track it didn't consider the trip a success!

The company hadn't put enough ballast on the narrow-gauge line that snaked over the country's backbone two miles up in the Colorado Rockies. Some of the rails clung to steep mountainsides on shelves just wide enough to support them. And the roadbed wasn't kept up because the company didn't take in enough money hauling mining equipment, ore and passengers to pay for much maintenance.

In 1884 after two years of construction it had completed the Alpine Tunnel at the altitude of 11,523 feet, a phenomenal engineering feat. The project was developed to conquer the last big hurdle between the eastern slope of the Continental Divide and the Pacific Ocean. The tunnel, timbered in redwood, was the first attempt to get rails across the Continental Divide and the first railroad tunnel drilled in the United States. It was the highest elevation reached by any railroad anywhere and was built with tremendous effort against bitter odds of extreme cold, severe wind and mountain snows, with primitive equipment.

The train crews had nine months of severe winter with tons of snow blocking the tracks, which more often than not were also covered with ice. Then there were three months of cold weather, with porcupines and falling rocks to contend with.

It all added up to some of the roughest railroading in the country in the early days and it took real men to get by. Maybe be the hardships were why we all got a kick out of the simple jokes the crew played on each other, like putting Limburger cheese under the boiler. It didn't take long to get rid of the awful smell, providing of course, you could locate the cheese and clean it out.

I got into railroading at the age of eighteen as a call boy with the Santa Fe in Colorado Springs. That was early in 1906. The following Christmas Day I went to work in the cinder pit helping the night engine watchman clean locomotives, shake down grates and clean ash pans. In the spring of 1907 I was firing a switch engine. On October 8, 1908 I went to work out of Denver to Pueblo on the Santa Fe & Colorado Southern, in the days when their trains ran north and south on the Santa Fe tracks.

Early in 1909 I was cut off the extra board in Denver and had no job, so I went to work on the South Park from Como, near the old mining town of Fairplay, and stayed in a place where the snow blew right through the brick walls. From Como, I worked toward Leadville

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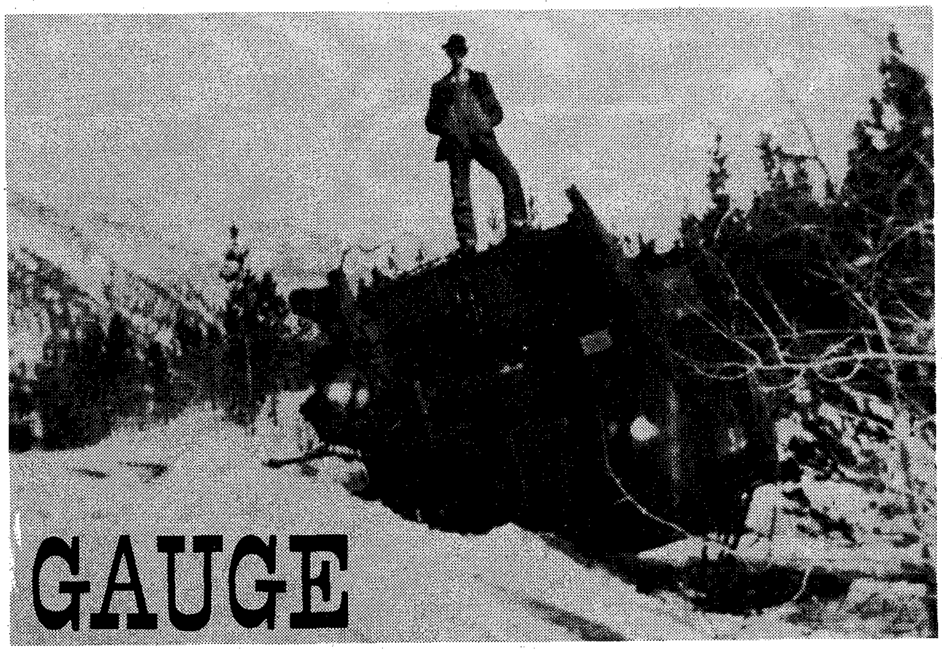
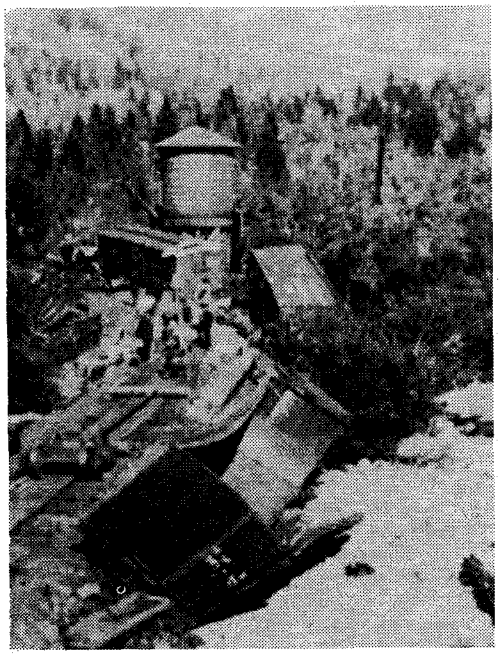


GAUGE

Photo Courtesy Dow Helmers

Top opposite page: Diamond stack engine No. 199 built by the Mason Locomotive Works, known as a "Mason Bogie," exits the west portal of Alpine Tunnel in the 1890s westbound for Pitkin after helping a freight up the hill and through the hole. From the book *Historic Alpine Tunnel* by Dow Helmers. Above: This caboose of the Denver South Park and Pacific Railroad was derailed between St. Elmo and Romley because of ice on the tracks. Left: Another accident on the Denver South Park and Pacific Railroad happened below St. Elmo. Below: At Pitkins, Colorado, a SP&P train is shown with three engines which helped it up to the Alpine Tunnel on the Continental Divide. On the lead engine is a triangle-shaped plow. In the foreground is a banjo-shaped switch.



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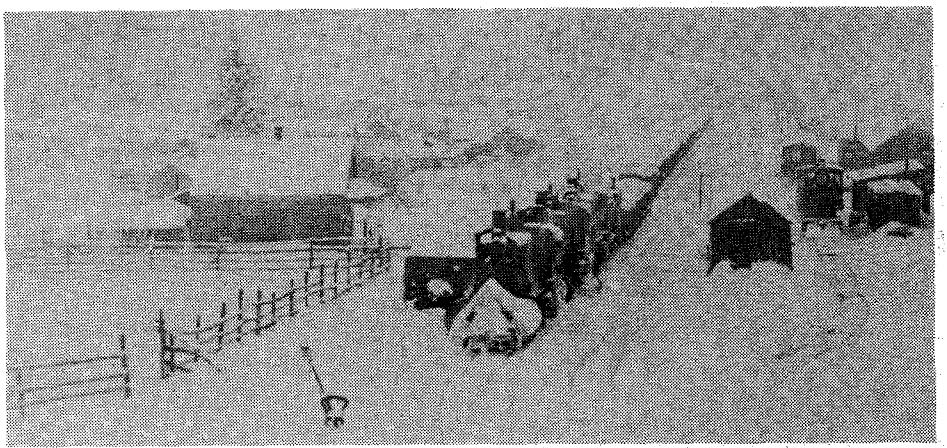

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The Fightin'est Cow

(*Continued from page 27*)

tried to get the cattle we wanted as near to where we could get with a pickup as possible. When we tied them up, we would not have to lead them too far to haul them to a pasture we had in north Canon City. We were holding them there till we were ready to sell them.

I had a good dog, but didn't use him unless I had to. We tried to get this cow and calf down off the mountain, but this cow would fight us, then run as hard as she could. Harve got after the calf as the cow and calf had split up. A cow runs a lot faster than a calf.

It was about 1 o'clock when we jumped this cow and calf. I wasn't riding the best horse I had. We were tracking her, but this cow didn't slow down much. I never did get sight of the cow till late in the afternoon. She went around some fences and finally got to Currant Creek.

We went up the creek a mile or so then turned up Underhill Gulch. I was trying to catch up to her now as she was getting farther away from where we could haul her out. The cow went up Underhill Gulch to where there was a waterfall. She couldn't get up here, so she climbed a real steep hillside. When I saw her she was up nearly a quarter of a mile.

I set my dog on her. My horse was so tired I knew that he couldn't climb that steep hill. My dog caught up with her and gave her such a bad time she finally just came back down the hill near me. I ran her back to Currant Creek where she decided to fight me instead of running. I roped her around the horns, then started looking for a place to tie her up.

There were no trees in this creek bottom, only a lot of big boulders. There was one big rock that was setting on two more with a hole under one. So I ran my rope under it and tied her there. This was not a good way to tie her up, but my horse was tired and the cow would only fight me. The dog kept her from hooking me or the horse when she ran at us and she would then fight the dog. When I left the place where I had the cow tied, the sun had gone down and I was sixteen miles from the ranch on a very tired horse. But I continued on home and got there late that night.

THE next morning Harve and I took our pickup to about a mile from where the cow was. We figured we could lead her to the pickup on foot with two long ropes, about sixty feet. A man can hold a small cow like this one. She weighed about 800 pounds; cows that ran in this rough country never did get very big. It was probably because grass was too scarce and not being fed in the winter didn't help either. We got to about one half mile of her with the truck and figured this was not worth bringing our horses fifteen miles to lead one old cow one half mile. When we got up to where she was she had run to the end of the rope and she fell with her head under her.

I should have tied her up real close to the rock so this would not have happened. We got her up, but lying on her head all night caused her neck to be kinked. Her head stayed around against her side. She was a young cow about three years old.

Harve said, "I can fix her neck." He pulled out her head and jumped up and down on her neck with his boot heels. That didn't do any good.

We got two ropes, let her up and started working her down to where we had left the truck. Her head was sore from having the rope on her horns all night. After a cow or steer is tied up overnight they learn to give to a pull on that sore head. When she tried to hook the man in front, the man in back could prevent her from doing this with a firm pull on the rope.

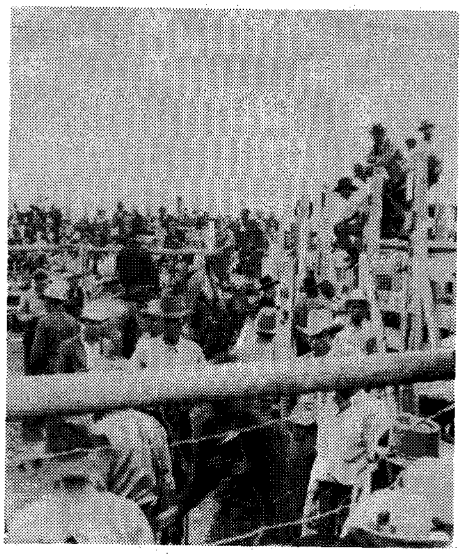
We finally got her down to where we had left the truck; we had to let down the end gate to get her into the crate or box on the truck. We took her down to the pasture in Canon. In the barn there were a lot of horse collars. Harve suggested that we put these collars on her neck so her head could not turn around against her side. We put these collars on her from her horns to her shoulders. We kept her in a pen and fed her hay. It was a wonder that all this did not kill her.

We left the collars on her about three weeks, but as soon as we took them off her head went back around against her side. Her neck was still kinked. A month or so later, we sold these cattle to Jerry McCarthy who had a pasture near Pueblo where Pueblo West is now. We sold him about 100 head of cattle and about 60 of them were wild. The wild ones were those that we had gathered during the winter. Harve and I drove these cattle down to Jerry's pasture.

Jerry did not want a cow with a kinked neck so one day in June I hauled the cow back to the ranch and turned her out on the range. When I let her out of the pickup she ran a ways then turned around a couple times. She had to do this to see where she wanted to go. After I turned her out I did not see her for two years. I did hear about her once, though. I was up at Dave Walker's helping him with his cattle and he asked if I had a cow with a kinked neck. I told him that I did and where in the world had he seen her. He said, "I saw her over in Espinosa Gulch." That was way north of where our cattle ranged—about fifteen miles from where I had turned her out.

A year or so later I was riding out on the north end of our range and in a little bunch of cattle I saw this cow. It was late in the summer and she still had her head around against her side. She was bulling. I worked her and this little bunch of cattle out into some open park country. Pretty soon she caught on that I was driving her, so she quit the bunch of cattle, running as fast as she could. I took down my rope and caught her and tied her to a tree. I then went to our cow camp and got my gun and pickup, then went back to where I had tied her and butchered her right there. She was real fat at that time. Anderson and Morgan would take a beef on our grocery bill any time we had one.

I would say that was the toughest cow I ever saw. How she lived and got fat, all that time in the shape she was in, is remarkable.



Lawrence Bruce

This picture was taken at Ponoka in the early '40s at their stampede. The man on the horse is Lawrence Bruce, an early rancher in Central Alberta on the Battle River. He was one of our great horsemen who passed away several years ago. Besides running a large herd of well-bred saddle stock, he traveled most of Alberta with rodeo stock, putting on several stampedes of his own. For years he trailed a herd of bucking stock 200 miles to the Calgary Stampede. He never missed their stampede throughout his life. Besides being a top rider, he also trained some of the world's top riders. His son Winston is the Director of the Calgary Stampede, and has also won the World's Championship.

Bruce was well known throughout the U. S. A. and Canada among all horsemen and bronc riders. The plank chutes of those days turned out some of the greatest bucking horses on earth and also the greatest bronc riders.—Arthur J. Hamerl, 336 Trafford Drive, N. W., Calgary, Alberta, Canada

A Cowboy Joke

I was thinking, after reading about Ace Reid's "Cowpokes," you could stand a few cowboy jokes. I would like to submit the Number One Joke to get it started.

This cowboy was in the saddle shop and finally found just the one for him. It was a real working saddle with a decoration or two, just enough to make it a real beauty. The salesman polished it all up for him—getting all the dust off and putting a real shine to it.

When he was ready to go, the cowboy grabbed it by the stirrup and drug it out the front door of the shop, across the rough sidewalk and threw the saddle into the back end of his pickup where it landed very unceremoniously amidst a jumble of bobwire, old horseshoes, fence posts, axle grease and what have you.

The cowboy climbed into the cab and then remarked, "Now I won't have to worry about getting it scratched up."—Langdon Richter, P. O. Box 788, Taylor, Texas 76574

Welcome, Dutch Bentley!

From about July, 1936 to about September, 1937 I served with Troop E, Second Cavalry at Fort Riley, Kansas. I attended horseshoeing school and was known to some by the nickname "Dutch." From March, 1941 to January, 1946 I was with the 29th Engineer Topo. Battalion, Company D, Survey Co. The name of the company was changed to 1540th Engineers. I would like to hear from anyone who remembers me or who served during the same time intervals in either company or troop.—Richard C. Bentley, Rte. 2, Box 61F, Prairie Grove, Arkansas 72753

Apologies to Marysville

I wish to correct a statement on page 20 in the Fall issue of *Old West*. Marysville, California is a thriving little city of approximately ten thousand people in the beautiful Feather River Valley with the playground of the Sierras looming over it and the big Oroville Lake with recreational area only a few miles away. There are numerous rice fields and fruit orchards in the valley. I have been there several times in years past, the last time only four years ago.

I am a faithful reader, enjoy your Western stories and have been to many places mentioned. My father was a cowboy in the free range time in the Indian Territory now Oklahoma.—Rena M. Stewart, 22526 Raymond Road, Perris, California 92370

☆ ☆ ☆

Marysville, California is a large town, population about 10,000, and very prosperous. It is the Peach Center of California. Marysville is not a ghost town!—John Reed, 7486 Monterey Street, Gilroy, California 95020

☆ ☆ ☆

I have just finished reading "A Lady Goes to the Mines" in your Fall 1976 *Old West*. As I have lived in the northern part of California for ever so long and know the area "Dame Shirley" traveled very well, I would like you to know that the picture on page 20 (the small square one at the bottom left hand side) is not Marysville, California. The town or city has never faded but increased in size to where it is one of the largest cities in Yuba County.

No doubt the picture was mislabeled as it doesn't even resemble Bidwell's Bar that is mentioned in the story. I have the "Shirley Letters" and have been to the area where she wrote the letters. Just thought you would like to know.—Mildred Forester, 1358 Pearson Road, Paradise California 95969

Editor's note: First off, the author of this story, Virginia Eller, was not to blame for the photo errors. We take full responsibility (mainly because we don't know how to get out of it).

There used to be a story about a cowboy who was always getting thrown from his horse but who would say, if someone caught him afoot, that his hat had blown off and he'd dismounted to look around for it.

Now, that's an alibi with class, and we wish we had one as good. But since we don't, how about a plain, "Excuse us. We'll try harder in the future to get things right."

The Stranger and the Rose Quartz

A friend of mine gave me some back issues of *Old West*, among which was the one for Winter 1971. It carried an article on the rose gold quartz in northwestern New Mexico.

Except for a frustrating chain of events, the source of this quartz might have been rediscovered in 1934. A man we will refer to as Mr. Schultz (not his real name and he is now deceased) ran a small storage and general repair garage here in Albuquerque. He was also very much interested in minerals and kept an attractive display of various ore specimens in his front window.

One afternoon he was under a truck installing a universal joint when a man walked up to the side of the truck and asked in a Spanish accent, "Are you the man that knows about minerals?"

Mr. Schultz answered that he was, and that he couldn't spare the time to check out any samples at the moment because he had to finish a couple of rush repair jobs. He told the man that he could leave the samples on the office desk if he cared to and return later in the evening. The man agreed and departed.

Later that evening Mr. Schultz noticed a small cloth bag on the desk but since he was tired and still had some paperwork to do, he didn't open the bag. Instead, he pushed it to the back part of the desk where it became part of the jumble of parts lists, manuals, etc. Two or three days later Mr. Schultz decided that the man wasn't going to return and he might as well open the bag anyway. He fully expected to find the bag filled

(Continued on page 44)

The South Park Narrow Gauge

(Continued from page 29)

and Gunnison. Later, I went on the board of the Santa Fe and worked on it until 1914.

AFTER having fired a standard gauge I had an awful time my first trip or two as a fireman on the South Park because of the difference in the size of the engine. The amount of coal I had to shovel was sure different. On the standard gauge between Denver and Colorado Springs we used to strip down to our underwear, but you couldn't do that in such a cold altitude as the narrow gauge traveled.

There were other differences, too. I had thought it kind of unusual for Bert Whitney, an engineer I fired with on the Fishing Special from Denver to Grant, to wear clean white cotton gloves with his overalls and a white handkerchief in his pocket. Well, all the engineers on the South Park wore Panama hats in the winter, just to be different!

I'd never been concerned about porcupines, but they were sure thick along the South Park narrow gauge. It was against the law to kill them. I hit one once with only a light engine, no train, and stopped to make sure it was dead. It weighed a monstrous fifty pounds! Porcupines could be killed easily and some people killed them for food even if it was against the law.

The most exciting part of the ten-mile road for crews and passengers alike was down the western slope from Alpine Station to Quartz Creek where there was a narrow shelf just wide enough to support the rails. The Palisades was located two miles west of the tunnel where trains made their way past a granite cliff over an extensive stone wall that had to be built to hold the rails. The wall is still there.

Al Hebert was an engineer nicknamed "Cigarettes," who was always up to playing a trick. On my first trip with him, we got to Hancock where we were to switch with another engine. As we went by, a guy on the other engine hit Cigarettes with a snowball and it stung. Cigarettes wadded waste paper and rags soaked in oil and when we made a second pass, the guy who'd hit him with the snowball had his head hanging out the window just haw-hawing away. Cigarettes' oily wad hit him right in the mouth!

It was sometimes simpler on the South Park to solve a problem than to send word down below that you needed help. Like the time several miles from Pine Grove when we realized a side rod had broken because there was little give when we went around a curve. If it wasn't fixed it would pull the wheel out of line and we'd jump the track.

I was a fireman for $129 a month and wasn't often called on to make such repairs. But if somebody didn't volunteer, we'd wait around for hours after we telegraphed for somebody to come up. Besides you most always got credit points for the work.

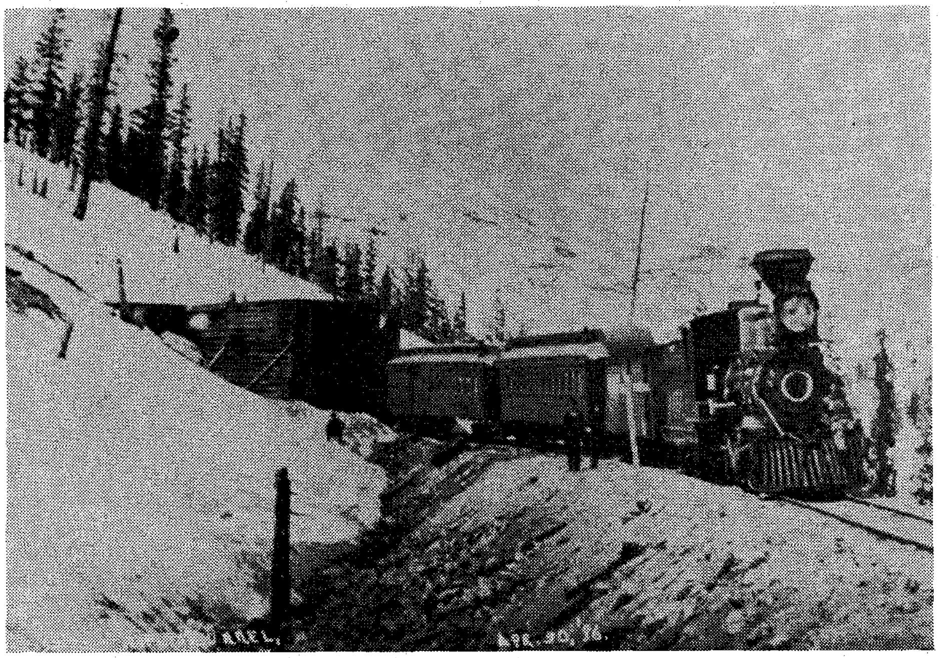
I crawled between the wheels and underneath the engine to take the rod off the opposite side to bring the train in. There was a pin on the wheel and a nut on the collar of the broken rod. The nut had been there so long it was beaten up. I began cutting it off with a cold chisel. The temperature was 35 degrees below zero at 9:30 a.m. and I was lying on ice and snow trying to swing a hammer in cramped quarters. I had on a denim jacket and overalls over my clothes. Fifteen minutes went by, then twenty.

"Bert, are you cold?" Al Hebert yelled now and then.

I was under the engine about half an hour and didn't feel the cold until I crawled out. Then I shook all over and couldn't talk.

The east portal of the Alpine Tunnel was equipped with a snow shed. Photo taken in 1896.

Photo Courtesy Denver Public Library



THE YEAR 1909 was a bad one for the South Park Railroad where snow and snowslides were concerned. We left Como at 10 a.m. April 2 with two engines and a rotary snowplow to dig out two engines stuck between Romley and the Alpine Tunnel. Conditions were so bad it took us all day to get to Romley. Since it was too much to fight the snow in the dark, we stayed there all night. Two old maids and their brother ran a place at Romley where they charged fifty cents for a meal and fifty cents for a bed with eighteen covers because there was no stove in the room.

Ed Ennis, a big man who was engineer on the rotary, and the fireman slept on the rotary which had a lot of room and was nice and warm because of the steam boiler. While Ed was asleep, somebody poured oil in his mouth.

The next day we took the snowplow right up to the stuck engines. The engine I was on sent us straight through the 1,771-foot-long tunnel and right down to Pitkin on the western slope. There, we stayed snowbound for seven days.

On Easter Sunday, April 11, we left Pitkin headed back through the tunnel to Como on the eastern slope with five engines and two trains. When we got to the tunnel thirteen miles away, we sat about an hour and a half. The engineer and brakeman walked through the tunnel to see if we could get through on the other side, then telegraphed the dispatcher in Denver that there were two to three inches of ice on the rails and several feet of snow. The dispatcher said, "Go!"

Fortunately, I was in the middle engine, No. 73, with Engineer Mike Conroy, on the mixed train. We had just cleared the tunnel and found the snow to be seven feet deep because there hadn't been any trains over the road for several days. Suddenly we were stuck. The head engine, No. 64, had hit the ice. It jumped the track and slid down the mountain on its side. The snow piled in front of it, stopping it almost 150 feet down.

The fireman, Guy Elliott, and Engineer Fred Winter got off, but the road foreman, George Gray, went down with the engine. However, he got only a cut on his ear from an oil lamp in getting out.

If we didn't show up at St. Elmo they'd know something was the matter, so the conductor walked to the telegraph office at Alpine Depot on the west side of the tunnel to send a message to the train dispatcher for a rescue outfit with a snowplow. It turned out that we would be stranded until the following Wednesday. It was eighteen days altogether before I got back to Como from that trip.

We slept in the engine and twice a day walked through the tunnel to the eating-rooming house at Alpine Station for meals. There was a combination coach in the second train and to pass the time I went back and played pitch.

It was the following August before the snow had melted sufficiently for a crew to bring the engine back to the top. Engineer Fred Tingle used Engine No. 73 which I had fired on the train when we got stuck, to pull the engine up in August. As the snow had melted, the engine slipped farther and farther down the

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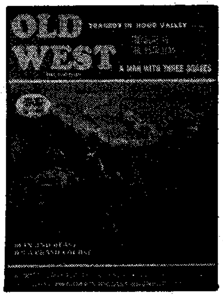

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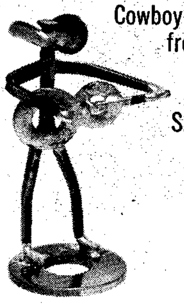

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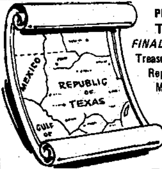

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canyon until it was at the bottom, 500 feet below the tracks. There had been too much snow for it to be damaged. There wasn't even a broken window.

In 1973 I was up there where the engine went off and could still see the marks where they brought the engine up the hill.

SOMEHOW spring always managed to arrive, the treacherous ice and snow disappeared from the tracks and the choke berry bushes leafed out on each side of the tracks going into Pitkin. It was right here one time we had this little engine going into Pitkin when the fireman sneezed and his false teeth, both uppers and lowers, fell out. He told the engineer to stop so he could pick them up.

"That's your tough luck!" replied Zongheim, the engineer, and the fireman had to walk back a mile to find his choppers.

But no matter what the weather, there were accidents on the South Park which was abandoned in 1910. One of the really bad wrecks happened when a train of ore ran away between Boreas Pass and Como. Engineer Rudy Swartz stayed with the train and was killed, and all that was left of the engine was a naked boiler.

It was true—you had to need a job and be able to take it to work on the high altitude South Park Railroad.

Ruel Packer and His Boys

(Continued from page 20)

whirled, bawled some more and I had the ride of my lifetime. Stayed with her.

"In a daze, it seemed, I could hear Indians whoopin' and screamin' and John yellin', 'Stay on, Earl!' I managed to—somehow. All at once the mare broke into a fast, smooth run. I sure was glad to let her go. Glancin' back I saw John comin' at a trot and far, far back, the Indians wavin' and growin' smaller and smaller. After about a half-mile the mare slowed to a longer lope, easy as a rockin' chair. I pulled her up and she seemed willin' to walk a spell while John and his string of horses caught up. When we reached the Washita it was runnin' bank full and swift from a heavy rain upstream. Without a pause the mare plunged in, swimmin' high. I pulled my feet up into the saddle. We crossed and waited on the far side.

"John had troubles when he came to the river. The lead horse wouldn't jump in. John's big horse pulled him in. The others followed—the last one pulled loose but swam on across. When John crossed over he quickly tied the lead horse to a bush. This held all the others nose to tail. Then he rode to the place where the loose horse was comin' out. He missed his grab and the bronc ran off toward a thicket, rope draggin'. I took a chance, rode to a tree and managed to dismount though the mare did do some buckin'. The long rope came in handy. I ran with it around a tree and snubbed her close enough to hold her while I helped John. I was partly naked as I ran after him. My pants had got wet in swimmin' the Washita so I took 'em off after tyin' my mare. I noticed John was partly bare also. Th' draggin' rope on the loose bronc hung in the bush.

"I caught up with John and we reached the thicket, but just before gettin' to the horse a swarm of mosquitoes almost devoured us. We got the horse, though, tied the rope to John's saddle-horn and returned to the others—punctured with mosquito bites.

"When we came to the South Canadian River it was runnin' high but we managed to cross. Right at sundown we rode into our farmyard—eighty miles at least, beeline, from where we'd started at sunup that day! I tied my beautiful but oh so tough mare real short in a stall. She was wet with sweat but hardly blowin'. The others and John's horse were pantin' and all a-lather. They were put in a corral. None had to be tied—they were far too fagged for any foolishness. But you know, if that chestnut-sorrel had got loose, I have no doubt next day would have found her back there leadin' her wild bunch along Elk Creek."

OUT on the prairie not too far from the Packer farm was a "trading post" operated by a man and his son, William Marion Berkey and William ("Bill") Berkey. Later this post was named for Ed Le Guerrier, a half-French, half-Cheyenne man who once had been an Indian scout. Settlers corrupted his name to "Geary," the name of the Blaine County town that was built there when the railroad came through. Bill and his wife, Elizabeth ("Bet"), had four children, two boys and two girls. Earl courted Georgia, second eldest in the family, and married her in Geuda Springs, Kansas where the family had moved and were operating a hotel in conjunction with some "health springs" (mineral waters of several kinds). Later the couple moved to Geary, Oklahoma Territory, then back to Geuda Springs where I could be born in the Jayhawk State so much liked by my mother. Then another move back to the town of Geary where Dad took up painting and paperhanging as a trade and began playing baseball every chance he got with the local team. His first paint job was on some government houses built for Indians.

Sketch by Author

Sketch by Author

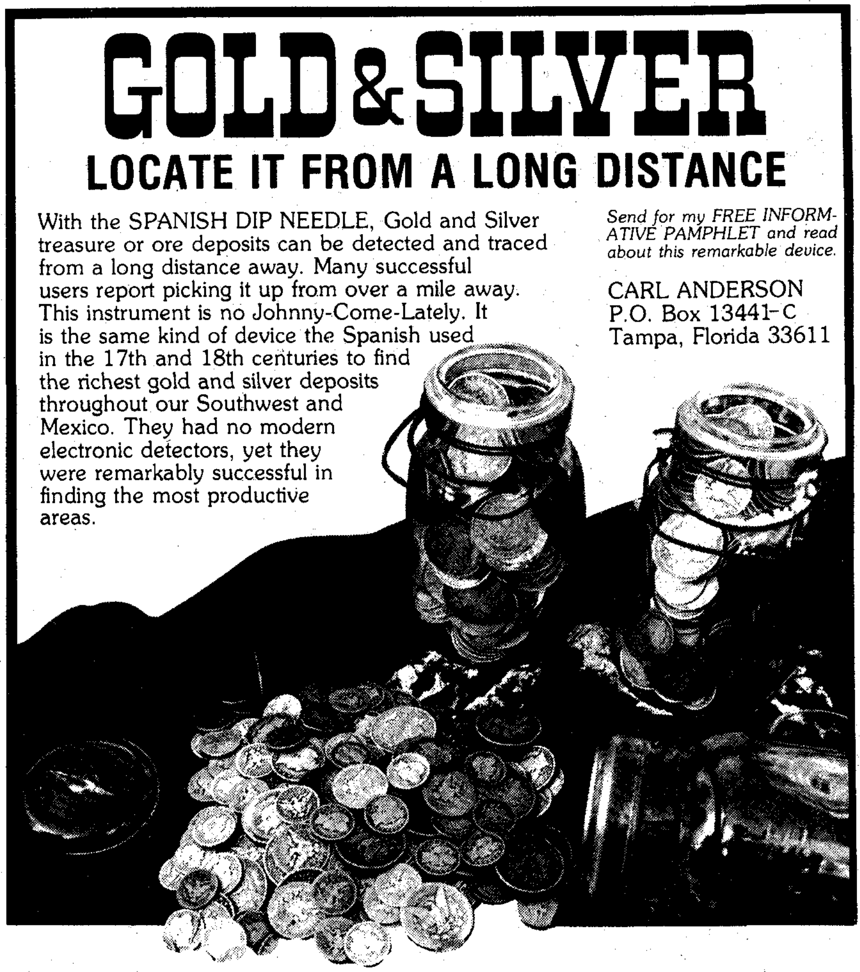
Sometimes he hired T. A. for the work "when Thurman wasn't playing poker," he said. From some of my uncle's escapades one might get a biased opinion of him. He *was* a sort of puzzle—loving little children, classical music, flowers and often helping out some down-and-outer. Sometime T. A. pitched on the Geary baseball team. Dad said, "If he'd straightened out I believe he'd have made it in the big leagues."

But it seemed T. A. preferred being a spectator in the stands, where with a boozing friend they'd start a brawl that always ended in a free-for-all fight when they played El Reno. Because of these fights there was bad blood between the teams. Games were seldom finished—changing to fights—and the hometown, because of overpowering numbers, always won the brawls.

One time in Oklahoma City, T. A. was going along a sidewalk. Just ahead, coming his way, was a cop. In T. A.'s hip pocket was a pint of whiskey. Just as the cop was about to pass him, the bottle dropped from T. A.'s pocket and smashed on the walk. Like a flash he looked up, shook his fist and cussed the supposedly blankety-blank so-and-so who'd thrown a bottle of booze at him from an upstairs window directly above. The cop pulled his club and dashed up an iron stairway leading into the rooming house—to arrest the dirty rascal who would do such a thing. T. A. vanished.

Ma was most rabid about liquor in any form, but she thought a lot of T. A., despite his waywardness. When we lived in Geary, two of the local lawmen got on his tail—he was running with a gunny sack containing bootleg booze. Ducking down an alley T. A. rushed in the back door of our house. It was hot weather—no fire in the cookstove. He opened the oven door, hid the booze and scooted. Ma was in the next room and knew nothing about it. When the two knocked on the door and told her what they wanted she was horrified and followed them through the house in their search. Unsuccessful, they left. In a couple of hours T. A. sneaked in the back door and was retrieving his booze when my mother came in. She really blessed him out. What a brother-in-law!

At those baseball games where T. A. entertained the crowd, Dad was catcher.



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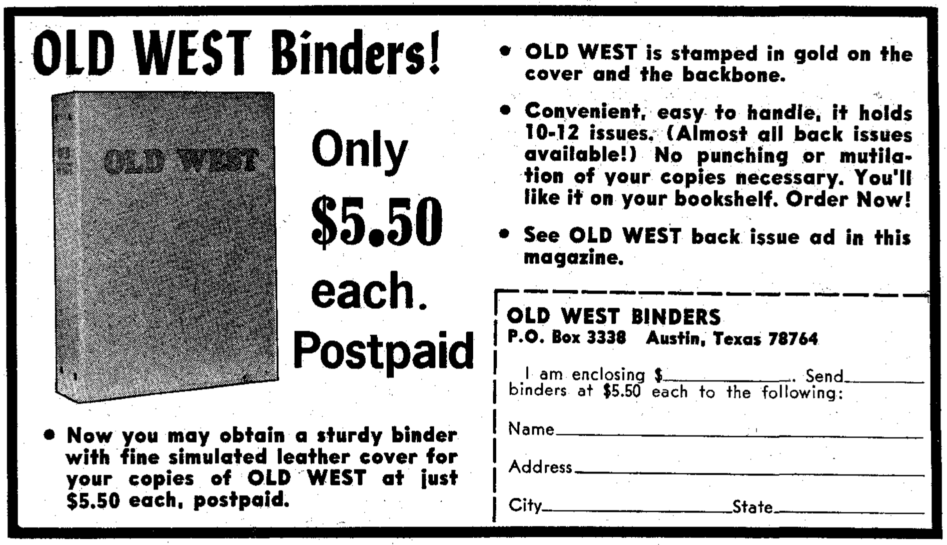

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"You can't sell 'em if we can't find 'em!" This comes from our readers in a flow of letters that is too constant for comfort! I've found them myself, sometimes on the bottom shelf, completely covered by other publications. Now we don't have nutin' against other publications, but we'd like a breath of fresh air and the sight of light now and then ourselves—so if you find our magazines covered, we'd sure appreciate your leaving them in the same approximate spot, but at least giving them a show. Sometimes, if you take them completely out and put them in another spot, the wholesaler will get upset and take them off completely!

One day a foul-tip caught him on the Adam's apple. Dad said, "I almost died from the blow. Next time I got behind the plate I'd lost confidence—so I began playing left field. We used a little old thin glove and you had to *hold* the ball if you caught it. At that, I remember it took about two seasons of playing before I muffed my first fly ball.

"Oh yes, I did try to catch a few games after getting hit in the neck, but before I did I took a piece of tin, cut out a flap and fastened it with wire to the bottom of my mask. It hung down as a protection to my neck. My teammates gave me the name 'Tin Whiskers' from then on." While Dad was playing left field a baseball scout offered him a job playing for the St. Joseph, Missouri club but, much as he loved the game, Dad turned down the offer because he thought it best for his family.

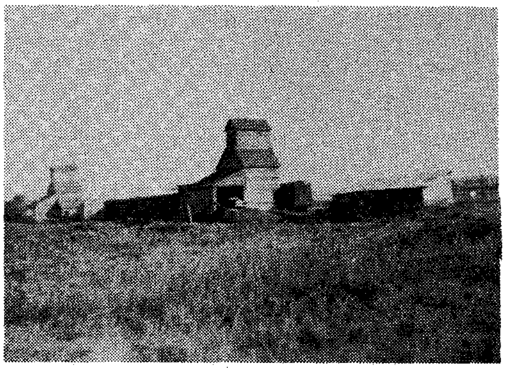
Dad's heart was set on farming. He'd built a new house in Geary but when a man offered him a quarter-section in Ellis County, Oklahoma for it, the trade was made. It was good to see him so happy over the deal.

It was about 1908 when he headed from our place in Geary for our farm, about 125 miles away by section lines and cut-across trails. His quarter-section was 4½ miles southwest of the town of Supply—now officially named Fort Supply, after the historic old fort located on the banks of Beaver Creek east of town. In preparation for his solo trip Dad bought a double-box wagon, worked it over to his liking and extended the width by using 1" x 12" boards on each side, with other additions. He installed wagon bows with a white canvas cover and loaded in supplies.

Early one morning he hitched up Dolly and Kate, climbed aboard and headed north by west—mostly north. The weather was nice, the way unsullied by pavement—with wild flowers in many places and an abundance of quail and prairie chickens. Dad let the horses take their time. He wanted to enjoy this trip to the fullest. He never did say how long it took to reach the farm. My guess—five days, possibly less. About forty-five years later in recalling this trip, Dad smiled about one incident that occurred about sundown while he was driving across a broad expanse of rolling prairie half-way between Geary and old Fort Supply.

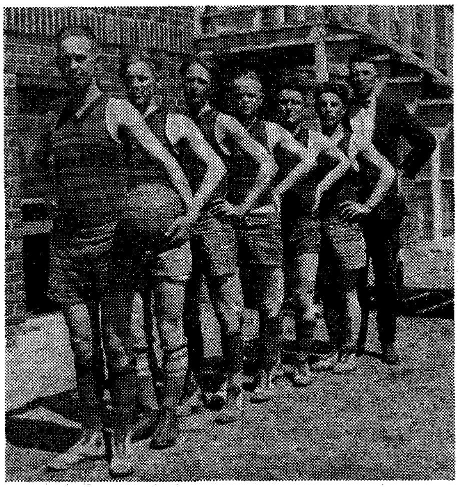
Here the road snaked generally northwest. Some distance ahead, two unusual rigs he'd been following for several miles pulled to a stop just over a rise.

DAD said, "The vehicles, each pulled by two horses, were some sort of carriages all closed in and I figured they must be loaded down since they'd been movin' so slow for that kind of light rig. When a young woman got out of the rear one and walked my way I saw she was a gypsy all decked out in fancy duds. Just before she reached my wagon I stopped the mares. The girl moseyed on up, looked at me, showin' white teeth and a big grin, and said, 'Can I get in and tell your fortune, Meester?'



Supply elevators. The author and his father Earl painted the far one.

Earl Packer, his daughter-in-law Magdalen (the author's wife), and her long-haired German Shepherd, Dusky, in the front yard of John L. Stone, who married Earl's youngest child, LaRue.



Supply High School basketball team during the 1920-21 season. From left to right: Earl Teeters, "Jed" Harding, C. L. Packer, Steve Redfern, "Jess" Hudson, Bill Hurst, and the coach Jack Makoske.

"I told her she could, gave her my hand and helped her in. She plopped down on the seat beside me, asked me to hold out my hand, palm up, then she studied it and went through a rigmarole of talk and said, 'You geeve me a silver dollar, please.' I handed her a dollar. She closed her hand over it and spoke some more stuff—sounded far-fetched to me. Then she flashed another big smile and said 'Thenk you. I go now.'

"I squinted at her and said, 'Not till you give me back that dollar!' She looked real surprised and said, 'Oh, I forgot. You no want to pay me for telling fortune?' I said, 'I didn't agree to that.' She forked over the dollar, climbed down without any help and hurried down to where a man was waiting for her by the rig. They seemed to be jawbonin' about somethin'. Guess she was tellin' about the dry haul on the dollar. I just sat there and waited. If they had intended to do anything foxy they must have changed their minds because they finally drove on. Could be her sharp, dark eyes had spotted my 12-gauge Winchester pump-gun in the wagon. Anyway, I placed it real handy just in case they might be waitin' for me over the next rise, but they must have been movin' on faster because I never saw 'em again. But that night I *did* keep my shotgun right by my side and I slept with one eye kinda open."

As Dad topped a high slope after leaving Woodward, Oklahoma, he saw undulating land stretching westward to the far horizon. Somewhere over there lay his farm. Ahead, a gradual slope led down to the Wolf Creek bottoms. The next day he followed a sandy trail that would be sort of paralleled by tracks of the Wichita Falls and Northwestern Railroad when it reached the town of Supply on January 1, 1912.

Dad forded the sandy creek, coming out on the west side. On his left a long stretch of sand bordered the water. Buried there was an old wagon—the front end and a bit of the tongue show-

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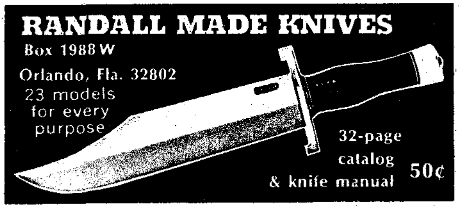

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ing above the sand. He wondered about that wagon and I don't think I ever thought to tell him—but an old friend, Ray Cunningham, once told me the wagon was one driven by a teamster to the old fort which then was (and still is) the Northwestern State Hospital. The wagon, heavily loaded with coal, had bogged down in quicksand. The teamster managed to unhitch his mules and get them and himself to safety. The wagon was left to its doom.

Dad drove along the grounds of the historic old fort and on to Supply—along the main street, a dirt road—then on to the farm in Ellis County just across the line from Woodward County. Near where Dad unhitched Dolly and Kate were remains of an old dugout. Folks around said it was reported to have once been a sheepherder's home. Years later I learned that the western tip of the Oklahoma Panhandle, once called "No Man's Land," had been sheep country during the days when the Santa Fe Cut-off angled across the northwest corner of Cimarron County, Oklahoma. Traces of it can still be seen there. Mexican sheepmen had moved their flocks from nearby New Mexico into the shadow of Black Mesa, pasturing them in the creek valleys. So possibly, before cattlemen took over, a few of these herders may have moved on eastward and grazed their flocks around our little spring. After Ma and I joined Dad on the farm I found parts of an oxen shoe and a big brass shell casing near the ruins of the old dugout. Several gun experts told me it was probably from a big-calibered rifle used for buffalo hunting.

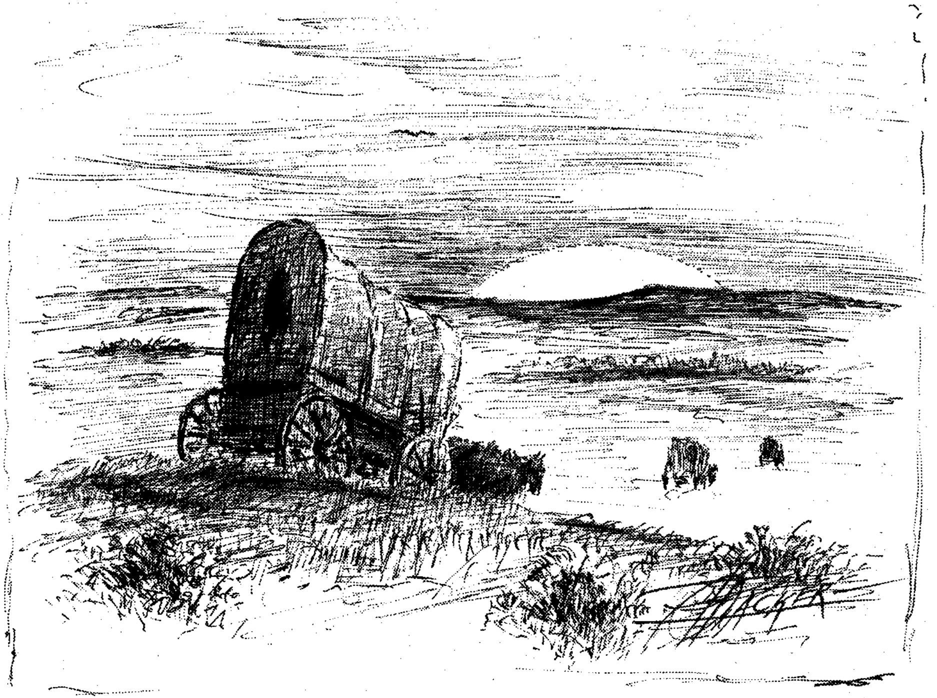
BUT BACK to Dad and the mares. The wagon was his home; the big prairie, home for the mares while Dad plowed and planted a crop and built a two-stall barn with a shack attached for his house. This was done "while I rested," said Dad. Later there was a frame house where we'd spend most of a ten-year period and where my two sisters, D'Arline and La Rue, would be born.

During our time on the farm a government mule buyer came to Supply and asked where he could find good mules for the army. World War I was in progress. Someone told him to call Earl Packer because "he knows every mule in the county by its first name." We had a rural phone. The man called Dad and told him what he'd heard. Dad said, "If you'll hire a friend of mine also, we'll find plenty of big mules for you because the ones I *don't* know by their first names, Neil Mason does." Neil was a local rancher who'd been an early-day cowboy. A deal was made.

In Dad's Model-T the trio bounced over a lot of rutty roads for several days and located plenty of mules. The mule buyer had the back seat all to himself. On an awfully rough road northwest of Supply the Ford banged into a big chughole, breaking a spring. The buyer had been bouncing around like dice in a cup when the spring broke. He was "shore shook up," said Dad. "Don't know why he was so scared—musta figured we'd never get back to civilization. We were away out on rollin' prairie all cut up with canyons. While he sat there, big-eyed and hunkered down in the seat, Neil and I went across the road to a bob-wire fence. Neil's high-heeled boots made quick work of kickin' staples out of a cedar post. We took it, cut some wire from the fence and wired the post in place on the broken spring. Got on into town with no trouble—only a little more joltin'. Boy was that greenhorn happy!"

While we were on the farm there were rough times for farmers and ranchers on several occasions. Once Dad fell back on his old trade to earn enough to keep going on. He contracted for painting a bunch of grain elevators from Supply on west along the W. F. & N. W. tracks, clear out into the Oklahoma Panhandle.

Sketch by Author



T. A. helped on this contract. He and Dad traveled in the same Model-T that eventually hauled us to Texas in 1921. When they finished the job at small towns along the tracks, the tall elevators in fresh barn-red paint added a cheery accent to subdued tones of the prairie landscape.

In 1974, a sad note was struck on our last trip along the highway paralleling the old W. F. & N. W. when we saw dug up ties lying askance all along the road-bed, bearing mute testimony to the abandonment of a railway that had served our country for about sixty years.

Proyecto De Guerra

(Continued from page 21)

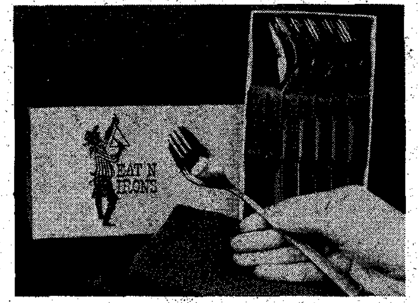
Never again would all of the tribe be united under one chief. Johnson's foolish, short-sighted plan had succeeded.

JUAN JOSE had been walking a line between peace and animosity for years. Living an ostensibly peaceful life, he was nevertheless a thorn in the side of the mining faction of Mexico. As a youth of great intelligence he was asked to attend Mexican schools. While being educated for the priesthood, a group of Mexicans murdered his father. Bitter and filled with resentment, Juan Jose returned to his people. He became their chief and, in his own way, sought his revenge.

Juan Jose could read Spanish and his men had little difficulty intercepting messages dispatched from Chihuahua and Sonora. His warriors then raided supply wagontrains on their way to the mines, while he innocently hung around the village. Mexican mining interests wanted Juan Jose dead. It was not difficult then for James Johnson to collect a magnificent sum for Juan Jose in addition to the payment for other Indians' scalps.

One of the survivors fortunate enough to crawl away from James Johnson's slaughter was Mangas Coloradas, a huge, powerful man with a large head. It is the nature of the Apaches to plan for all eventualities. Consequently, it didn't take the survivors long to choose this sensitive, reflective, fairminded man as their new leader. Within hours Mangas and his fighters mounted their ponies and headed for Oposura to avenge the deaths of Juan Jose and their dead brothers. Mangas drove Johnson and his townspeople out of Oposura. They fled to the Santa Rita mining settlement and Johnson was never heard from again.

On their return, Mangas and his band of Apaches chanced upon a trapping party headed by Charles Kemp. Again the Apaches sought revenge. Kemp and his twenty-two trappers were struck down. Another trapper, Ben Wilson, was also in the area. When the Johnson disaster took place Ben Wilson was twenty-six years old. He had already spent over two years in the Gila country working for trappers. He had found the Apaches to be particularly affable. Juan Jose had been a frequent visitor in Wilson's camps.



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Ben had saved his money from these two years of trapping and headed his own party. Just before the massacre of Juan Jose, the Wilson party completed its junket and separated. A few nights after the slaying, Ben and two of the men who had remained with him—named Maxwell and Tucker—were lying beside their campfire near the Gila River. Suddenly Ben sensed that someone was peering at him from the darkness. Looking up, he saw a six-foot two-inch giant of a man not more than three feet away. None of the trappers had heard Mangas approach.

As Ben looked up, Mangas raised his arm. Other Apaches then stepped into view. Without making a sound the Indians had surrounded Ben and his two companions. It was not difficult to sense that this was not one of the friendly visits. The previously hospitable Apaches now appeared hostile; the usually congenial Ben Wilson now appeared frightened. Mangas Coloradas spoke.

"Take off your clothes. Without them you cannot escape. We will counsel. We will decide what to do. We will decide if you will die. Here are buffalo robes. They will keep you from the cold."

A few hours later Mangas returned. It was then that Wilson learned that James Johnson was responsible for his impending death. Mangas related the story of the death of Juan Jose.

"We have taken many lives. My braves want more. We will make more talk."

Like a man on death row Ben Wilson could do nothing but await death— and wonder about this man Johnson. Mangas and his companions could be heard in vehement discussion. The chief felt that the deaths of his people had been avenged; his warriors did not.

It was midnight when Mangas Coloradas returned to Wilson. Somewhat excited, he explained that he had come upon a solution which might satisfy his braves. One of the three men could probably escape if the other two were sacrificed. Mangas then again departed.

MAXWELL had a sprained ankle. Tucker had a bad stomach and was feeling sick. They both urged Wilson to go. Wilson, sick at heart, pulled his buffalo robe around him more tightly and darted into the darkness. Before he could reach the nearby woods, he heard a commotion behind him. So loud was the shouting that Wilson surmised Maxwell and Tucker had decided to flee. He could hear the approaching Apaches. Cold and terrified, Wilson hid among some large rocks. Soon all was quiet. The war party had decided to wait until sun-up to search for the white men.

Beyond the rocks in which Wilson was hiding lay a wide expanse of flat land. It was twenty miles to the next canyon. Wilson knew he must reach that canyon by sun-up. Running, walking, tugging at his buffalo robe and running again, stimulated by desperation, Wilson man-

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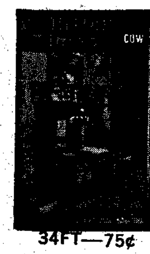
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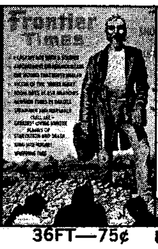
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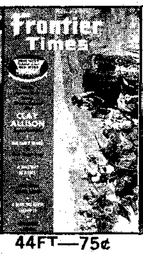
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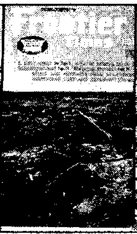
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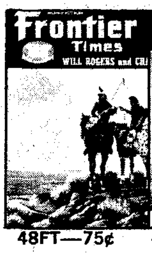
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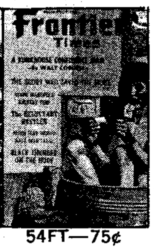
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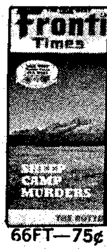
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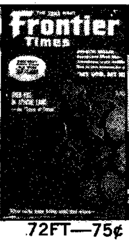
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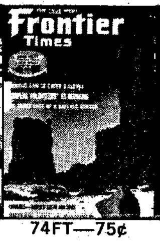
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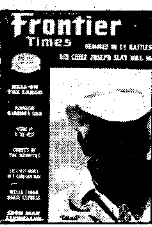
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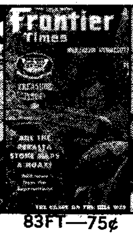
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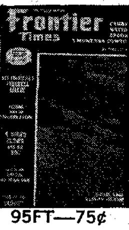
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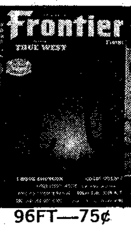
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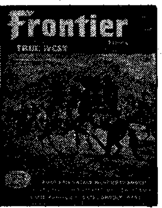
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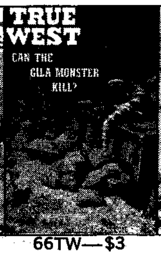
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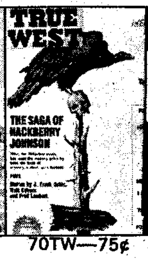
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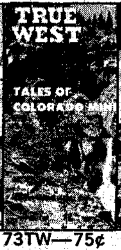
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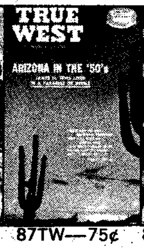
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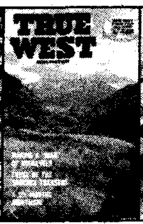
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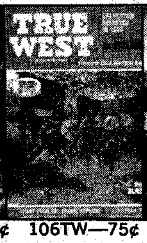
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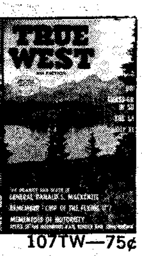
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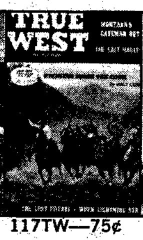
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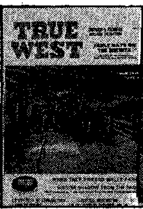
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**Old West issues
on next page →**

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aged to traverse the twenty miles. Just as the sun was climbing over the canyon, Wilson was climbing into a crevice high in the canyon wall. He now had to get enough rest to be able to cross another thirty-miles expanse that night. There were over one hundred miles between Ben Wilson and his next meal. In no time at all he learned how wise was his decision to spend the day in the hiding place in the canyon wall. In the distance below he could see Mangas and his men searching for him along the canyon floor.

The canyon walls turned from tan to reddish orange and then to gray. When the gray turned to black, Ben Wilson climbed down from his hiding place. Weak, but determined, his soles wearing thin and with only the robe for warmth, he steadily crossed the prairie, reaching the edge of the Rocky Mountains as the sun rose the next morning. Now feeling safe, but still overexcited, he decided to travel in daylight. He had to get to a town and food as soon as possible. All that day he pressed forward, resting for a short spell that night. Before daylight he started out again. At dawn, and to his surprise, he came upon a small sheep ranch. He knew the area but did not realize that this ranch existed. By this time his shoes were completely worn out. He had gone four days without food and drink.

In the ranch dwelled a typically hospitable Mexican family. Although they were not wealthy, they not only provided him with clothes and a good meal, but the rancher made him some moccasins. Wilson was indeed grateful as he recounted the experiences of the last three days.

With food for his remaining trip, Wilson set out for Santa Fe. He survived the plight created by James Johnson. In three or four days Benjamin Davis Wilson would be back in civilization.

In 1844 he would become Don Benito, a prominent California rancher.

In 1849 he would become the mayor of Los Angeles.

In 1855 he would be elected to the California State Senate.

Still later a mountain, Mt. Wilson, would be named for him.

The fate of Ben Wilson has been amply recorded. The fate of Maxwell and Tucker, brave men too, is less precise. It is not believed they escaped. Mangas said they did not.

Night Raid on Leaday

(Continued from page 13)

brought law and order to southwest Coleman County.

A couple of leeches got themselves elected to the offices of justice of the peace and constable. They operated on a legal fee basis with a very small percentage of fine money collected going to the state and county, and the remainder into their own pockets. They semed to have a special grudge against any of us who made our living on horseback.

Our ranch was in Concho County

across the Colorado River from Leaday, but we were running cattle on some of the unsold land of the Day Ranch. Joe Anderson, a cowboy working for us, and I had been over to that pasture to brand a few overgrown calves we had missed at the regular September branding. It was after dark when we came through Leaday on our way back. Most of the inhabitants had turned in for the night.

WE happened to run across Jim Collier, a farmer from the Stacy community. Jim was quite a rounder and reputed to be a pretty slick cardshark. He told us they were fixing up for a little poker game at the Johnson store and invited us to join them. The other two players were old Three J and a traveling salesman. Joe and I would make up a satisfactory quintet.

I had sixteen or seventeen "rings on my horns" at that time and Joe must have been six or eight years older. He should have known better, but he was the kind that didn't give a damn. I wasn't a poker player either—I just thought I was. Supper was over at the hotel but Joe and I persuaded the cook to serve us a lunch in the kitchen. Then we rode down to the Johnson store and tied our horses to the hitch-rack in front.

The game ran along smoothly. As we might have expected, the stack in front of Jim Collier kept growing while the others were shrinking. I had already lost my two or three dollars that I had in my pocket and I was just sweating out the game. Things got a little interesting when old Three J made a backhanded threat to shoot Jim Collier. Jim had won a pot and Three J accused him of stealing a card to fill out his winning hand. "I've spoke to you this time, Jim," he growled, "if it happens again Old Blue will do the talking."

Before we got Jim's reaction to the threat, someone started rattling and banging on the front door. Old Three J was already mad over the alleged stolen card and he displayed his rage when he roared, "Get away from that door—or I'll shoot right through it!"

Then a shrill, shrieky voice replied, "What do you mean, staying out here all night! Open this door and let me in!"

The bravado went out of old Three J like air out of a busted balloon. He turned sort of pale and his hands started shaking. His usual belligerent tone of voice settled into what sounded more like a puppy-dog whine.

"Lillie, darling—just wait a minute. We was just ah—the boys was just ah—having a little lunch."

"They're not doing no such thing!" she yelled. "I know what they're doing. They're gambling! Open this door so I can see who the rascals are!"

I can't say how long that went on with him begging for time and her yelling and trying to break the door down. I do remember him saying, "Lillie, dear, just give me time to get my head together."

About that time one of the fellows said, "Open the back door and let us out," but old Three J was so rattled that he couldn't find the key.

They managed to get the door open some way and they jammed each other on their way out, leaving me up in the front part of the store still going through old Three J's pockets—or anything else I could get my hands in, trying to find that door key.

When the door came open, I took off down through that store picking up speed at every jump. In the meantime the old lady had decided to try the back door herself. If she had been one step quicker, I would have knocked her into kingdom come, because I went out of that door like a bull through a brush thicket. As it was, I just sideswiped her and turned her half-around.

"Run, you dirty scoundrel!" she shrieked. She didn't need to tell me that. I was already doing my best.

I JOINED the other fellows where they were hiding behind some bushes. Up at the store the old lady was carrying on louder than ever. Three J had regained some of his bluster and was talking back. I couldn't understand all their words, but it certainly wasn't the kind of talk made when hugging and kissing is going on. I did hear enough to learn that she intended to have us arrested for gambling.

We stayed hidden for the biggest part of an hour, talking things over. We wondered if she had recognized any of us and we wondered if she could browbeat old Three J into telling our names; but for once the old buzzard stood pat in spite of all her abuse. He was foxy enough to know that if he gave us away he would involve himself and the charge of running a gambling place might be made against him. This carried a greater penalty than common gambling.

None of us relished the idea of paying a fine and the salesman said he would surely lose his job if he was caught gambling. I wasn't anxious to have my name on the books as having paid a fine just like some common tinhorn, and I certainly would begrudge having to shell out twenty or twenty-five dollars with most of it going into that pair of bloodsuckers' pockets.

When we decided it was safe to venture forth, Jim and the salesman went their own way. Joe and I slipped around the dark side of the store to get our horses, but they were gone. Naturally we supposed that the old lady had turned them loose and run them off out of spite. We assumed they would try to go home and we trailed out after them on foot. When we struck some matches we found where the bridle reins dragged through the soft dirt.

Joe and I went on down the hill, across the creek and into the lane that led to the river a mile away. We caught up with the horses just short of the river. Fortunately one had tied himself by getting the reins tangled in some bushes and the other wouldn't leave him. Every step on that mile walk was made with cusses against old lady Johnson. We found out later that we were mistaken, blaming her for turning the horses loose. She had something else in mind that was worse than walking a mile.

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OUR NEIGHBOR, Houston Coffey, often worked for us when we needed extra help. He was sparking up to the Johnson girl—and he later married her. The next time we saw him, he told us what did happen as he got it from the girl.

When the old lady failed to bamboozle old Three J into telling our names, she camped herself on the front doorstep of the store, vowing she would stay there so she could find out who the horses belonged to when the owners came after them. The girl knew, so on the pretense of petting the horses, she untied them and gave each one a whack with a stick which sent them away on the run.

But we didn't know that. Joe said, "Let's go back and let the old woman know that we've got our horses." That was agreeable with me.

We rode back to town and made two circles around on the dead run, yelling like a pack of Indians. Before starting out that day I had hung a Winchester on my saddle on the chance of getting a shot at a wolf or a bobcat in the Colorado breaks. Just to make everything authentic, I pulled the Winchester and let go two or three shots into the air. Then we pulled our freight to the ranch. We intended the demonstration for the benefit of old lady Johnson only. We never imagined that it would arouse the whole country.

The mail hack didn't get to Leaday until around five o'clock in the evening. My dad liked to have the daily paper to read after supper. Even if it was a day old when it got to us, it still was news.

Before tying up for the day, I rode across the river to get our mail. Most everybody in town and some of the nearest farmers always gathered at the post office at mail time. That night there was a bigger crowd than usual. The only talk I heard was about the gang of outlaws that raided the town the night before. The most conservative fixed the number of the gang at five or six. Others claimed there were eight or ten—shooting at everything in sight. I wondered how long it would take for someone to claim bullet holes in their house.

That imitation constable was blowing about what he would do when he got his hands on the rascals. But he couldn't out-do old Three J. That old windbag was bragging how he broke up the raid and saved the town from being robbed. "When I got out there and Old Blue started talking—the s-o-bs pulled out in a hurry!" (From his action earlier that night, it was most likely he was under a bed instead of in the street bravely defending the town.)

As for my part, I was willing for the constable and old Three J to have all the glory. Besides, if either of us had ever told what did actually happen, we would have had to pay a fine for disturbing the peace.

Letter Rip!

(*Continued from page 31*)

with pyrites or rock with traces of copper or iron so you can imagine his surprise when he poured out over a pound of gold-bearing rose quartz. The gold was plainly visible in the form of tiny wires and a few flat flakes.

Mr. Schultz spent several restless days and nights wondering why the man hadn't returned and for years thereafter he hoped the stranger would some day come in and identify himself, but he never did.

Of course, there remains the possibility that the quartz came from a source other than the one in San Juan County. I guess we will never know.

At present I'm convalescing from two bouts of major surgery which forced me into disability retirement. If I recover sufficiently I plan to do a little prospecting in the mountains near Albuquerque. Small pockets of gold and silver were supposed to have been taken from the east slope of these mountains around the turn of the century. Who knows? I might get lucky and find some pockets that were overlooked.—Ralph Freelove, 3604 Westerfield, N.E., Albuquerque, New Mexico 87111

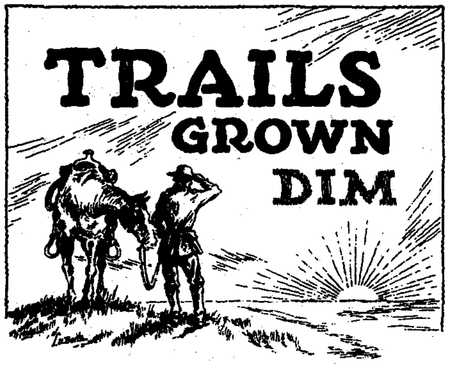
Western Book Roundup

(*Continued from page 1*)

better known to readers. This fine book should stimulate those interested in the story of Alaska.

GERONIMO SURRENDERS

The Truth about Geronimo (University of Nebraska Press, $3.75) by Britton Davis is the first Bison Book printing of this classic of the Geronimo campaign of 1885-6. Our fellow Westerner, Robert M. Utley, has enhanced this reprint with a highly informative foreword that explores the Crook-Miles controversy and makes a fair appraisal of the contributions of both in getting Geronimo to surrender. Davis, the son of Governor Edmund J. Davis during the notorious reconstruction days in Texas, was second in command of a company of Apache Scouts during 1885 and wrote from field experience. He knew and respected the Apaches. It is good to have this book back in print.



Readers' letters for "Trails Grown Dim" are printed as soon as space permits, so please be patient! If possible, please type your query; or if handwritten, print or write clearly, especially names, dates, and places—and most of all, please be brief. In accord with the content of our magazines and purpose of this service since its beginning, preference is given writers whose trails have grown dim out West: lost ancestors and relatives who were sheriffs, pioneers, Forty-niners, muleskinners, cowboys, Indians and Indian fighters, and so on. We can't run current "missing persons" notices or lengthy genealogical requests, but we do attempt to print all letters as soon as we can. Any reader having information concerning persons referred to below is asked to communicate directly with the letter writer; please do not write to us.

Price-Earle-Tubbs

Mary (Mollie) Earle married Benjamin Monroe Price, born February 1861 in Indiana. He was the son of Jasper C. Price, born in Tennessee, and America Tubbs, born in Indiana. I'd like to know places, dates of birth, etc. Mary Earle Price died in Falls County, Texas. She was alive July 12, 1891, the year their son, Silas Earle Price, was born. I am the daughter of Maud Price Frick. Her parents were Mary Earle and B. M. Price. Where is Mary's grave, etc?

Jasper C. Price and wife America left Indiana in 1849 for Pettis County, Missouri where their oldest of five children was born. He was William Timothy, born October 3, 1853 in Georgetown, Missouri. Their daughter, Maudy, was born in 1872 in Nebraska, I believe, and died in 1879 while visiting relatives in Marlin, Texas. I'd like to know when and where the son, Joe, was born.

America Price died in 1884 in Fairfield, Clay County, Nebraska. Jasper died in 1879 in Kentucky. My mother thought her mother came from Ireland.

A James Earle and wife Letitia lived in Marlin and were apparently relatives of Mary Earle Price. James was born December 24, 1823, and I'd like to know where, his parents' names, if he were an uncle to Mary, and any other information about any of these people will be appreciated.—Elizabeth Frick, 212 Redan, Houston, Texas 77009

Needham-Tucker

I am trying to contact anyone who is a descendant of, or has any knowledge of, Lewis Wesley Needham or any of his children. His first wife and the mother of his children, probably died in Maury County, Tennessee between 1814 and 1820. Her maiden name was Tucker, and her given name was either Russel or Roselle. The handwriting in the photostatic copy of deed written the 8th of June 1855—Record Deed Book 1, PP 580-583, Cass County, Texas has been hard to read: John Needham; Susan Miller, daughter of the said Lewis Wesley T. Needham; Martha Mooring, wife of Wyatt Mooring, all of the State of Tennessee.

Rebecca Russell, wife of Anslem Russell of the State of Kentucky; and Jesse Needham of Arkansas; Sina Simpson, wife of John P. Simpson; Nancy Inglish, wife of Bailey Inglish; Anny White, wife of Benjamin White.

Roselle's parents were William Tucker and Matilda - - - - Tucker, of Randolph County, North Carolina. William Tucker died in 1811 and Lewis Needham, then of Maury County, Tennessee was named among his heirs in the settlement of the estate between 1813 and 1817.

In the 1820 Census of Maury County, Tennessee Lewis Needham's wife was age 26-45. The 1800 Census of Randolph County, North Carolina gave his wife's age as 26-45 (twenty years earlier!). The one in 1820 is believed to have been his second wife, who was Mary Ann Bruton. Lewis and family moved to Madison County, Tennessee shortly after 1820. He bought land in Madison County, but after seventeen years he sold his property and moved to Texas. He left a will in Cass County, Texas dated December 4, 1848 naming his wife, Mary Ann Needham, as his only heir, having left property to each of his surviving children from time to time. His will was probated in January 1851. In 1852 Mary Ann remarried to a Daniel Hartzo.

I will appreciate any information concerning any of the names mentioned above, especially Lewis W. Needham's first wife, Roselle or Russell (Tucker) Needham.—Elma J. Hooker, P. O. Box 252, San Simon, Arizona 85632

Dunaway-Belt-Bostick-Porter

My grandparents were Jacob Lee Dunaway, born September 16, 1860 in Rutherford County, Tennessee and his wife, Martha Melvina Belt, born February 6, 1861 in Wilson County, Tennessee. They married at Mountain Peak, Ellis County, Texas on January 1, 1883. They lived in Ellis, Tarrant and Hood Counties in Texas and are believed buried at Lipan, Texas.

A grandfather, Caswell Harp Bostick, was born June 8, 1833, probably in South Carolina. He moved with his parents to Georgia about 1842 and was in Florida in 1849-1857. He was in the Georgia Infantry in the Civil War and moved to Texas after the war ended. He married Sarah Elizabeth Porter on November 7, 1867 and lived in Hood County, Texas until 1904-05. He moved to Lampasas County, Texas where he died March 16, 1915.

Reece Porter was the father of William A. Porter who was born August 9, 1824 in Lawrence County, Alabama. Reece was reportedly born in Ireland—but where? He came to America with his parents when he was nine years old. He married Bettie Taliaferro. He was my great-great-grandfather. Any and all information will be welcome.—Walter E. Bostick, 5332 Jackson Street, North Highlands, California 95660

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Birch Creek Massacre

(Continued from page 8)

An awful silence fell. Hayden shattered it with a voice shaking in anger, "That's enough of that! Back off and let 'em alone!"

For a few seconds, time stood still. There probably wasn't one Nez Perce in the crowd who hadn't suffered a personal loss from white men during the past few tragic months, and it was only natural that the bitter gall of hatred should trip the scale's balance. "White man be pony," one of the Indians hissed, moving toward Hayden with cat-like grace.

"You keep the hell away from me!" Hayden answered, and his whip lashed out so close to the advancing Indian that a tuft of black hair caught in its tip.

A cry of rage tore from the brave's throat, echoed by others of his tribe as they started toward the white men. Temporarily forgotten, the Chinamen were allowed relief for only a minute before other red hands grabbed them roughly. But to their glad surprise, they found they were now in friendly hands, and were being pushed out of camp toward the creek. An urgent whisper told them to cross the water and head upstream over the summit to Junction. "Go fast but be watchful," warned their benefactors. "Do not be seen by our people coming."

In the meantime, on this same day, white settlers had just learned that the war band was marching out of the area, so Colonel Shoup with some of his scouts and Chief Tendoy with some of his own had started following their trail to make sure it was true. Near nightfall, on Ten Mile Creek past Junction, they encountered the two Chinamen, near collapse but still trying to hurry. The doctor spoke fair English, but in his excitement he was hard to understand. After extensive questioning, the heartsick scouts knew there was no use to try to save the freighters—the Chinamen had witnessed that much before they were out of sight and sound of camp.

A brief discussion led to Shoup's decision to return to Junction with the scouts, get a pack horse and supplies and start back with a couple of men. Chief Tendoy with two of his sons, Jack and Tedim, and three whites, Alex Cruikshank, Bill Felkner and Alex Jarvis, volunteered to follow on down Birch Creek. It was a mighty tricky business to be on the heels of hostiles in the dark of night, and was later reported successful only because of "the acuteness of the Shoshoni Chief, who employed Indian craft."

SOON AFTER daylight the next morning, Colonel Shoup, Dave Wood and Frank Price, with a pack horse, met their advance party about two miles from the freighters' and the Indians' camp. The scouts had learned that the Nez Perce had left, going eastward toward Market Lake, and there was no need to further trail them.

As no one had had any sleep, they took time for rest and breakfast together before Tendoy with his sons and Felkner and Jarvis returned to Lemhi. To Shoup, Dave Wood, Frank Price and Alex Cruikshank was left the terrible task of going on to the scene of disaster.

They came first to where the frieghters had unhooked the wagons. All of the wagons and what was left of their heavy loads were still burning. The wreckage was complete.

A search soon located four white men within twenty feet of each other near the creek. Albert Greene's body, stabbed under one arm, lay partly submerged in the water. A stranger sprawled on his back in a clump of willows. But Hayden and Coombs were side by side, and evidence showed they had put up a vicious, toe-to-toe fight. Coombs had apparently grabbed the blade of a knife, as one of his hands was severely slashed, and Hayden's blacksnake had been cut off right at the handle—yet even in death he still gripped it tightly. A continuing search for the other two strangers known to have been with the freight train, located the body of one about a mile away where he had been shot from his horse.

Ed Swan, one of the scouts, had ridden up by this time so the five of them dug a hole big enough for the four bodies, and lined the bottom of it with willows. The stranger's clothing was searched for some kind of identification, but he carried nothing except money in the amount of $50 in one pocket. He was put with the freighters in the common grave.

Just as Shoup's party was ready to start covering the bodies, several men from Junction rode up, soon to be followed by more until there were fully fifty men at the scene. A number of them had come from Salmon City, and as a few of them were in light wagons, the four dead men were loaded up and taken home to be buried. The stranger who had been shot from his horse was buried where he fell, and a search of clothing revealed an identical amount of money, but not a thing to tell who he was.

Because Indians always removed their wounded and dead, there was no way to know what toll the whites had taken, but no one doubted that some had died. The fate of the third stranger, whose body couldn't be found, was presumed to have met death much farther away from camp in an escape attempt.

A few days after the massacre, riders on the Little Lost River cattle range, ran across a man wandering around exhausted and crazed. They took him to camp and cared for him until he regained strength and became rational enough for them to understand. Then a couple of men brought him down the Pahsimeroi and Salmon River trail to Salmon City. Colonel Shoup's son, George E., in his *Brief History of Lemhi County*, published during 1940 in the *Recorder Herald*, wrote the following:

"I was present when the riders came in and put their horses in the stable. The stranger, being tired, layed down upon a blanket that one of the men spread on the floor near the door. In a very short time a crowd gathered around to hear the man's story. Being present at first, I was near him and could hear plainly, though he talked hesitatingly and in weakened voice.

"The man's name was Lyons. His account was similar to that of the Chinamen up to the time of the aggressiveness of the drunken Indians with the freighters and disappearance of the Chinamen. He said that when the drunken Indians became boisterously playful he knew there was going to be trouble.

"There were many of the other Indians moving around and he quietly worked in among them and unseen away from the drunken Indians and from the white men, who remained at their camp. He kept moving back and forth but keeping a little further away and nearer the creek. He was not molested in any way by the Indians around him, but he felt that he was being watched and needed to be careful. He moved with seeming unconcern, carelessly kicking sticks or other small articles.

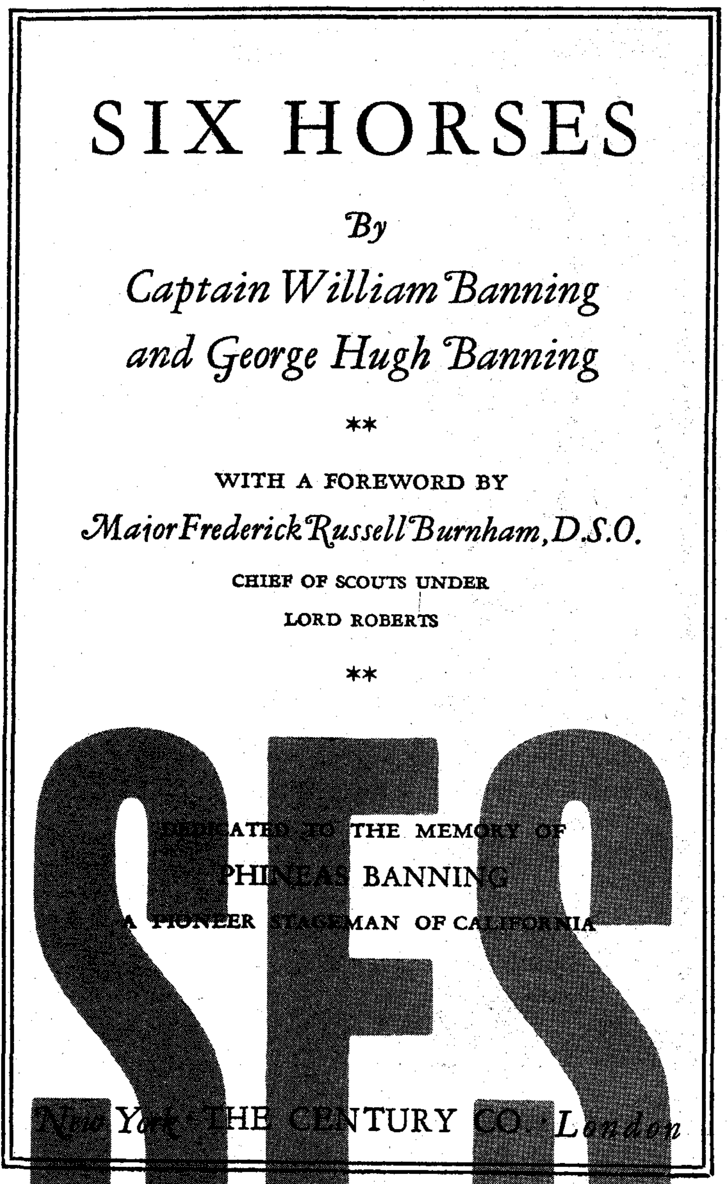
"When the fight started with the white men in their resistance, he knew then it was serious and fatal. The Indians pulled and jerked Greene around by the beard, and as the other men also began to fight furiously, the other Indians taking part crowded up to witness the fight. He knew that this was his only chance, and in desperation to escape and now being near the creek, he took the one chance offered by quickly dropping over the bank and into the creek.

"Unseen or not, he was not disturbed. He could hear the fight going on as he desperately hurried down the creek looking for a place to hide. Finally he came to where the bank had caved down, dropping a large willow bunch into the creek. Here he crawled under the willow and against the bank, panting and fearful. It was getting dark when he heard drunken Indians coming down the creek banks beating brush clumps and banks with clubs in search of him. But he was not discovered, and late in the night after all had long been quiet, he carefully crawled out, crossed the creek, and upon hands and knees slowly crawled far out and down through the sagebrush plains. After traveling far and finally feeling that he had really escaped, he got to his feet and ran until he was completely exhausted and could remember little or nothing until he began to realize that he was with white men and being cared for. He remained in Salmon City a number of days, and many times reviewed the entire occurrence."

This one life miraculously saved was a dramatic climax to a long, tragic summer, and as peace and security settled down once more, the settlers made one final gesture. A tall, slender monument was erected at the cemetery above town, and on three of its four sides the names of the freighters were inscribed, together with a fond epitaph for each. On the fourth side is written, "I was a stranger but they took and gave me a Christian burial."

Today another monument stands near a roadside cafe on Highway 28, between Salmon City and Idaho Falls. Its inscription tells us briefly of the tragedy, and marks the lonely site of the Birch Creek Massacre.

SIX HORSES



SIX HORSES

By

Captain William Banning
and George Hugh Banning

**

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Major Frederick Russell Burnham, D.S.O.
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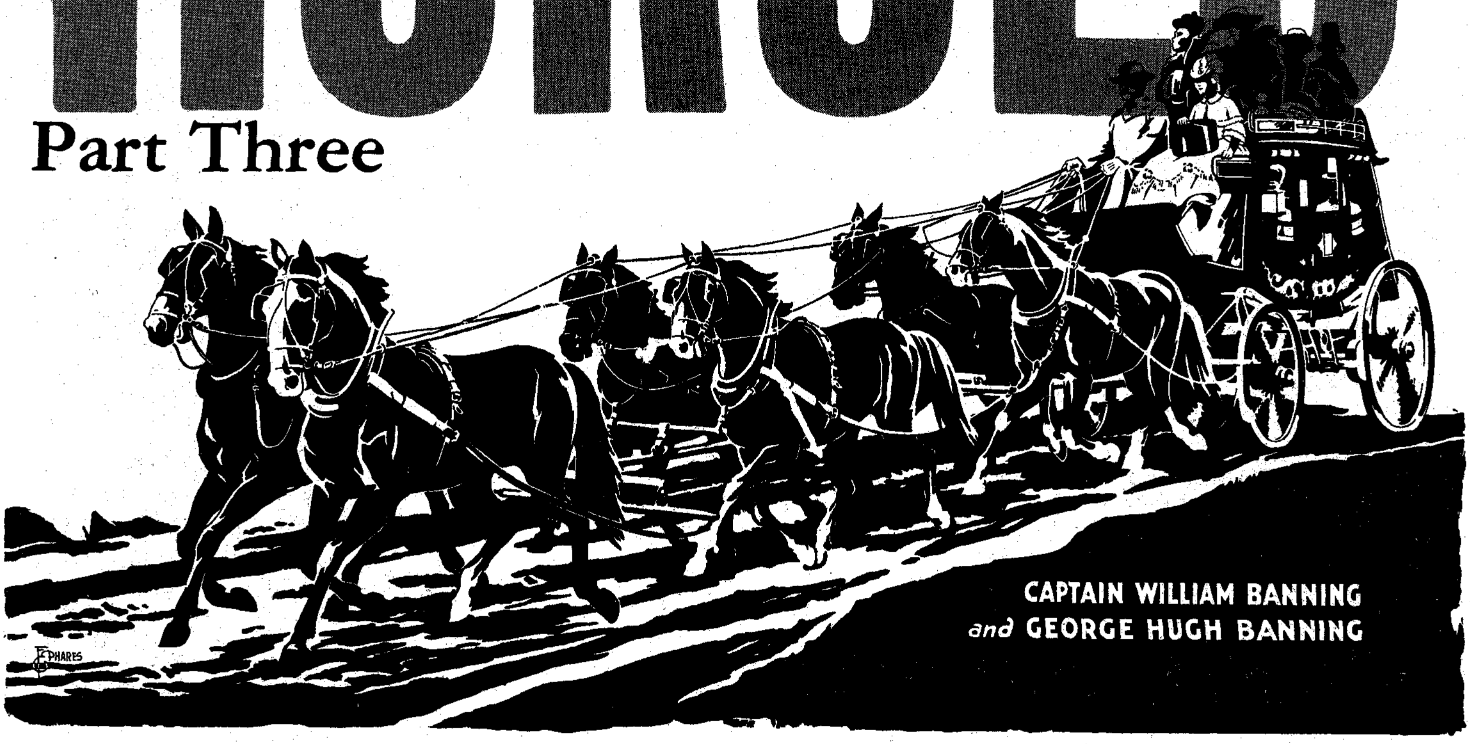
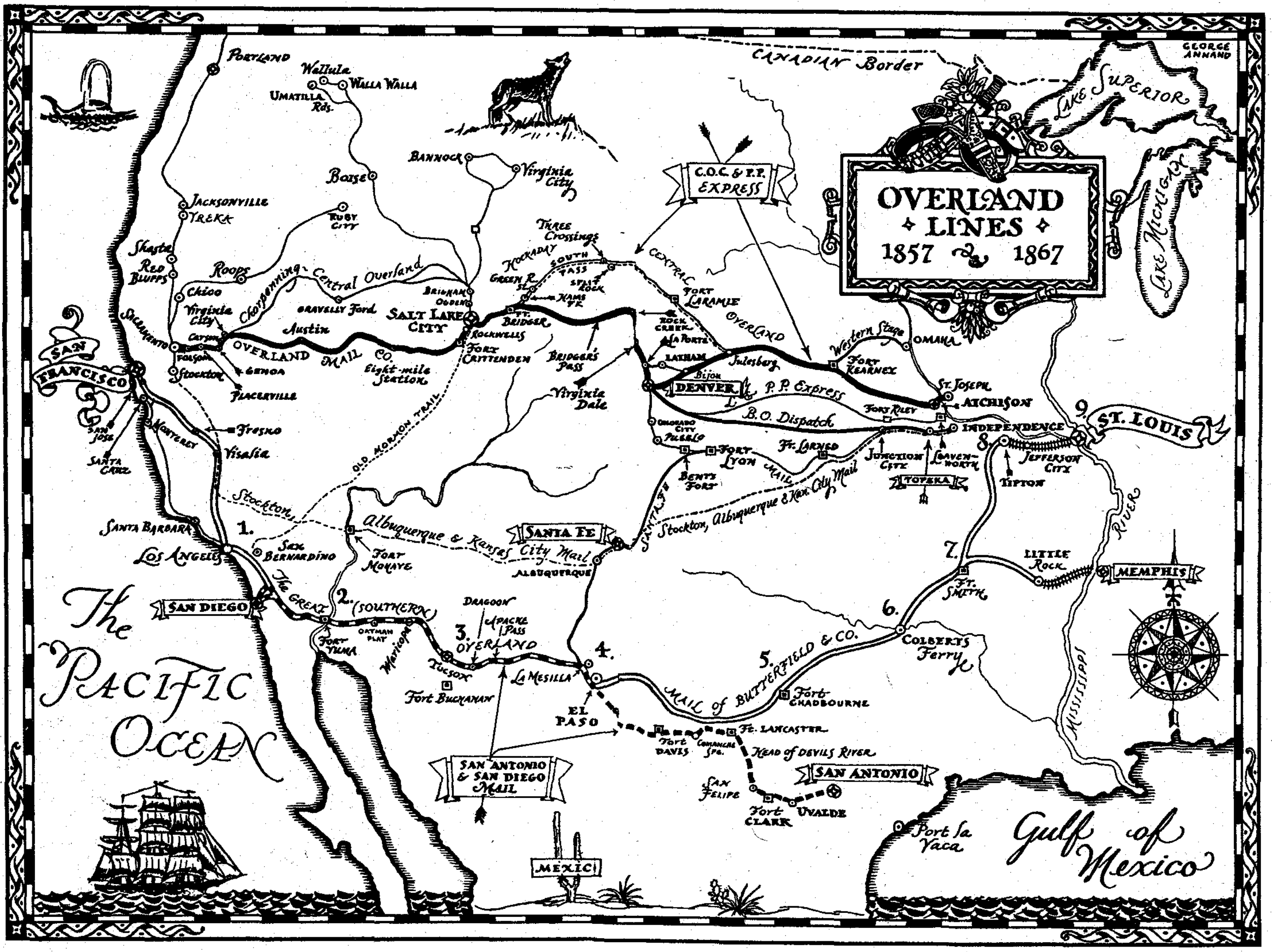


CAPTAIN WILLIAM BANNING
and **GEORGE HUGH BANNING**


OVERLAND LINES
1857 1867
GEORGE ANNAND
CANADIAN Border
LAKE SUPERIOR
LAKE MICHIGAN
PORTLAND
Wallula
WALLA WALLA
UMATILLA Rds.
BANNOCK
Virginia City
Boise
JACKSONVILLE
YREKA
RUBY CITY
Shasta
RED BLUFFS
Roops
Chico
Virginia City
Carson
SACRAMENTO
FOLSOM
Stockton
GENOA
PLACERVILLE
Chorpenning - Central Overland
GRAVELLY Ford
Austin
SALT LAKE CITY
BRIGHAM
OGDEN
ROCKWELLS
FORT CRITTENDEN
OVERLAND MAIL CO.
Eight-mile Station
THREE Crossings
HOCKADAY
SOUTH PASS
GREEN R. St.
SPLIT ROCK
HAMS FK.
FT. BRIDGER
BRIDGER'S PASS
Virginia Dale
C.O.C. & P.P. EXPRESS
CENTRAL OVERLAND
FORT LARAMIE
ROCK CREEK
La PORTE
LATHAM
Julesburg
Bijou
DENVER
P. P. Express
B. O. Dispatch
Western Stage
OMAHA
FORT KEARNEY
ST. JOSEPH
ATCHISON
FORT RILEY
INDEPENDENCE
9.
ST. LOUIS
8.
JEFFERSON CITY
TIPTON
COLORADO CITY
PUEBLO
FORT LYON
BENTS FORT
Ft. LARNED
MAIL
JUNCTION CITY
LEAVENWORTH
TOPEKA
SANTA FE
Stockton, Albuquerque & Kan. City Mail
SAN FRANCISCO
SAN JOSE
SANTA CRUZ
MONTEREY
Fresno
Visalia
OLD MORMON TRAIL
Stockton,
Albuquerque & Kansas City Mail
SANTA FE
ALBUQUERQUE
SANTA BARBARA
1.
LOS ANGELES
SAN BERNARDINO
FORT MOHAVE
SAN DIEGO
The GREAT
2. (SOUTHERN)
FORT YUMA
OATMAN FLAT
Maricopa
DRAGOON
APACHE PASS
3. OVERLAND
TUCSON
Fort Buchanan
LA MESILLA
4.
EL PASO
5.
MAIL of BUTTERFIELD & CO.
6.
COLBERTS Ferry
7.
FT. SMITH
LITTLE Rock
MEMPHIS
MISSISSIPPI RIVER
Fort CHADBOURNE
Ft. LANCASTER
Fort DAVIS
COMANCHE Sps.
HEAD of DEVILS RIVER
SAN ANTONIO
SAN FELIPE
Fort CLARK
UVALDE
SAN ANTONIO & SAN DIEGO MAIL
Port la Vaca
MEXICO
The PACIFIC OCEAN
Gulf of Mexico

WHEN GREELEY WENT WEST

HORACE GREELEY may scarcely be mentioned in connection with stagecoaches without suggesting the fabulous driver, Hank Monk. Yet, before the summer of 1859, both of these distinguished personages were living in abject ignorance of the other's existence. Neither, as yet, could boast of having contributed anything to the other's fame.

But while Greeley was firing off his journalistic whip from the desk of the "New York Tribune," much to the annoyance of the Buchanan forces and to the delight of the Central Overland, young Monk was banging away more or less in the same direction with a modest sixteen-foot length of hickory and buckskin of his own. He had just spent one very severe winter helping to hold down that strategic road which Crandall had opened in fifty-seven [1857] over the high Sierras. He had been breaking through snows which were officially declared, by all but an act of Congress, as being impassable. He had been pelting along through blizzards and through rain and sleet, exercising a capacity for endurance which was to give him a record, eventually, of forty-eight cold and stormy hours on the box.

Following the tracks of the Pioneer and of a new and very welcome traffic brought on by recent discoveries of silver beyond the California border, he had been driving for the Central Overland of George Chorpenning, using runners where he could not use wheels, passengers where horses failed him, whisky in cases of emergency, yet somehow delivering the mail sack, just as he was prepared to deliver Greeley "on time," and becoming very popular in addition. But now the day was drawing near when the two great men would rub noses, and give birth, incidentally, to one of the most pointless stories that ever stumbled on the threshold of immortality. This day, however, was happily a few months in the offing.

It was the spring of fifty-nine. The eminent "Tribune Philosopher," not yet fifty years old and still in good health, still undamaged in pride or person by any upstart Knight of the Reins, had decided to practice what he preached to all young men and "go west." There happened to be new action of interest on the central plains—new tides of emigration, gold booms, silver booms; humbugs, maybe—it was his mission to investigate and report. Nor could he have chosen quite a more critical time.

The remarkable service performed by the Central Overland during the past winter appeared, for one thing, to have done its own cause more immediate damage than good. The last session of Congress had closed with a disagreeable slam. The House and Senate had banged their doors each in the other's face; and a vital measure had been caught somehow in the jamb.

There had been the question of overland mail appropriations. Shouldn't the Central be improved? Shouldn't the Southern be reduced? Why continue the Southern at all, now that the short line had demonstrated its worth? Why continue the Central—the Mormon war was over? Many questions, of which these were not the least important, had been left unanswered. The Post-Office Appropriation Bill, for the first time within memory, had failed. Contractors were to whistle for their pay.

Added to this store of embarrassment for the Government, and distress for certain mail contractors, came a supply of dynamite in the shape of a new Postmaster-General. Aaron Brown had died.

Joseph Holt of Kentucky was now his successor; but in spite of his nativity, he was regarded as a far better friend of the sea-route mails than even of the Butterfield system.

When he swung into place it was with a belaying pin; there was overland blood in his eyes, and but little polarity in the action of his swivel-chair—he could turn it southward almost as threateningly as northward. *Any* postal route which did not pay expenses did not rightly belong within the province of his office. The department's business was not to develop new territories. Territories were to develop the business of his department. And although the weekly mail by the Central Overland had been all but swamped by government documents for which no postal returns could be realized, it made no difference. The Central route did not pay. No overland paid. There was to be an immediate overhauling. He whittled his pencil sharp enough to punch holes through almost any contract. Postmaster-General Holt was a practical man.

HAVING been appointed in March, he gave warning in April that the last day of June would be Doom's Day. Many would be called, few chosen. He would completely and properly annihilate the Kansas City, Albuquerque & Stockton Mail, not one of whose stages had yet pulled through, nor any mentionable amount of mail. As for the faithful "Jackass" between San Antonio and San Diego—he would knock twenty-eight trips per annum out of it! Six hundred miles had already been amputated from its middle; but now the remainder was to be reduced from a weekly to its original semi-monthly status. For "whatever the objects, political or otherwise, may have been contemplated by the Government in establishing this route through an almost unbroken wilderness," it was clear to Holt that its continuance at $196,000 a year, was "an injustice to the Department."

Then he hauled about as though to deliver a broadside even upon the strongholds of Butterfield. It may have been a gesture. He did not fire. But he gave it such a thoroughly unpleasant look that John Butterfield ran straight to the President.

He was told not to worry. The terms of the Great Overland contract would be respected; there would be full compensation for full service in due time. Thus protected, the credit of the Butterfield firm remained good. Wells Fargo & Company, proper, stood ready with the necessary advances to cover any overdue compensation from the Government. Wells Fargo stood ready as a firm, incidentally, thus to pave its way for an eventual début into the West as a stagecoach corporation, having long since gained a foothold as an express and banking concern. But other overland contractors were not so well secured. Those of the Central faced bankruptcy.

The line of Hockaday & Company, as a weekly, had been so burdened with mails that there had seldom been room for passengers. Now with a weekly organization on the company's hands, it was to be reduced to a semi-monthly. The same reduction applied to the western section of Chorpenning; but Hockaday had already been forced to the wall. Unable to stand in the shadow of the pending blow, the young proprietor had worried himself into a state of mental and physical debility; his partner, William Liggett, had lost the savings of a lifetime—his family paupered. The line was but a demoralized fragment, and passing now (May 11) into other hands.

Butterfield Station of Picacho, New Mexico.

Under all of these hovering clouds, Horace Greeley was to make his journey across the continent. He had come dodging and hiding from newspaper men through Chicago and St. Louis, bound for a certain overland terminus at Leavenworth, Kansas. Fortunately, he did not have to resort at once to what remained of the erstwhile Hockaday system. There was a phenomenal new establishment running double stages weekly through northern Kansas and onward to a little town called Denver which the late Rocky Mountain gold rush had recently put on the map. It was the Leavenworth & Pikes Peak Express, the first real stage line of the plains to run wholly independent of government support. Still, it appeared to have been in need of more patronage than the Pikes Peak boom had afforded. As the L. & P. P. Express, it was already ending a career of only five weeks. The last pair of its west-bound stages was to carry Greeley.

"Good-by, Al!"

"By-by, Bill!"

"You oughta got a haircut. The Arapahoes might scalp you!"

There were cheers; and two splendid L. & P. P. "Concords" rolled away. The New York journalist, however, was not yet aboard. He had been lecturing at some of the outlying settlements, and appeared shortly at some remote point farther along the road. He carried an old glazed traveling bag, marked "154 Nassau Street, New York, 1855." He wore a very rusty and well-worn white coat, and carried a still rustier and still more worn umbrella—blue cotton, with a bulge in the middle. His roll of blankets was shoved under a seat; his precious trunk, filled with manuscripts, was strapped in the after-boot. He shook hands with a fellow-journalist (Albert D. Richardson) and they rolled on together over the prairie bottoms of Kansas.

The road beyond the new town of Junction City was marked only by the wheels of the L. & P. P. E. It was a route explored by its original proprietors, Jones & Russell, and led westward between the Republican and Solomon tributaries of the Kansas River, and on to Denver. Beyond Fort Riley and Junction City there was but one more settlement on the road. It comprised two sticks, a bit of sail cloth, two whisky barrels, some pickled oysters, a salesman, and three boxes of sardines.

All other stopping places were tents and corrals belonging to the proprietors (now Russell, Majors & Waddell). These stands sufficed, however, for frequent relays. The line was commendably stocked. Greeley called his stage "a mere covered wagon"; but it was, none the less, one of fifty thorough-brace Abbot-Downing vehicles not long since imported for use on the line—the first Concord products that Kansas had ever seen. The animals were also the best stock available. They were mules, of course, horses still being regarded as unadaptable to the plains; but by means of eight hundred of them, driven in from Kentucky, wagons had been relayed between Denver and Leavenworth, 650 miles, within ten days, occasionally eight—in one case it was less than seven; although Greeley was obliged to devote the better part of two weeks to his journey as far as Denver.

He sometimes passed the night in a tent; he sometimes slept in the wagon, sometimes under the wagon. Methods were not dissimilar to those of the old Jackass Mail, and the days were equally wearing. Stream fringes of elm and cottonwood trees thinned away to no timber at all; and the drab prairies rolled out and away forever. It was a country no less monotonous in its buffalo grass than in buffalo hides and horns. The beasts were not to be counted; they appeared, literally, by the millions, vast herds shrouding the earth. One wagon of the line had been capsized by their thunderous stampeding, and the stage of Greeley was not to be spared altogether.

One grotesque herd had frightened the team. A lead line broke; a runaway followed. Then a crash and a general pile-up. The journalist reached Denver with a slightly wrenched and lacerated leg which kept him there a bit longer than he might otherwise have cared to remain—limping the dirt floor of the Denver House.

Here, in a long log building, his prospects for making up a week's loss of sleep were obliterated by midnight revelers in the bar-room, whence shouts and even whispers passed through the cloth partitions as though there were no partitions at all. Yet this place, with its canvas roof, lean-to kitchen and bunks unadorned by either mattress or pillow, was the only respectable hotel in Denver. The town was not yet roaring toward its future. A few quartz mills had sprung up to drown the cry of "humbug"; but of the population which had come with the original gold boom, there remained but a hopeful fraction. Greeley hired a private conveyance and drove on.

HE WAS bound northward for the Central Overland Mail line, which had been sold by the Hockaday firm to the present owners of the L. & P. P. E. There was soon to be a consolidation of both lines, and a bold investment to boot; but it was Greeley's misfortune to happen along before the stock of the failing L. & P. P. E. had been shifted up to the road of the bankrupt Mail.

He boarded the stage of the latter at Fort Laramie on June 30. This being the very day that the club of the Postmaster-General had been scheduled to fall, he was able to contemplate the action with genuine feeling—he was obliged, for example, to perch himself at the quaking summit of seventeen shifting mail sacks. This, he learned, was no exceptional haul. What then would be the load when postal deliveries would be made only half as often! The six-mule teams now used would then be unable to haul it without infringing grossly upon contract time. "So," comments Greeley, "they say, 'Please let us carry the mail weekly, though you only pay us for carrying it semi-monthly.' But no! this is strictly forbidden. The postmaster at Salt Lake has express, written orders to refuse it, and of course he at St. Joseph also."

Greeley's "Tribune" had been a friend of the Central; but it is remarkable that this attitude should ever have remained after the editor had sampled the route's wares. Having carried a wrenched leg and several souvenir bruises to remind him of the L. & P. P. Express, he might naturally have assumed that the fates would now treat him more kindly. At least, stages were not apt to capsize more than once in the course of one overland journey.

But his six-mule team, while crossing the swollen Laramie, proceeded forthwith to upset the theory, the mail wagon, mail, and all. In midstream the leaders had doubled back. Perhaps the driver was no six-mule man; for try as he might to discourage the maneuver by heading off the leaders with his wheel-team, he was pitched from the box to join all the flotsam that went drifting down the stream.

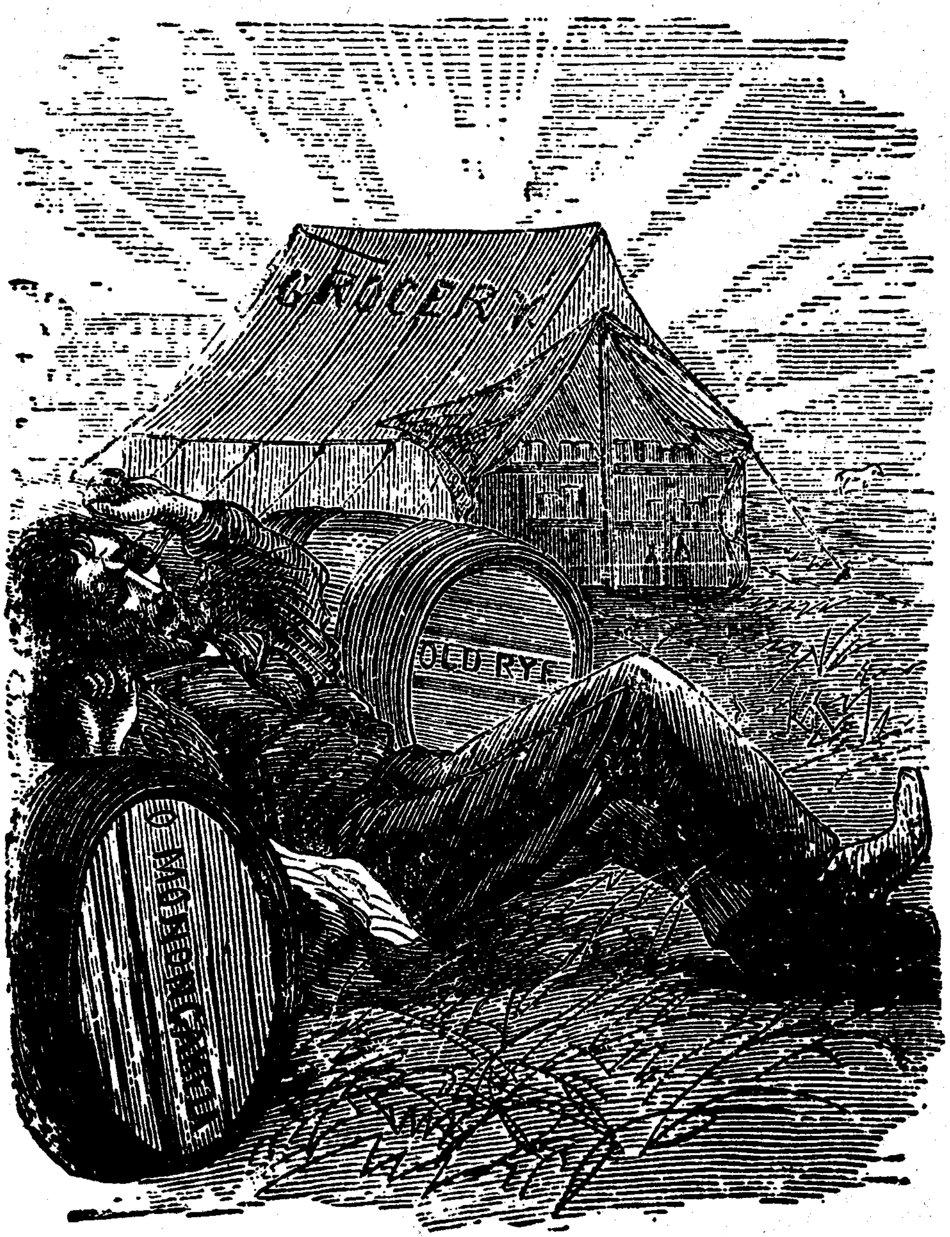
That being over and all things adjusted, it was scarcely within the province of ill fortune that anything of the sort should happen again. But it did happen before Greeley arrived at the Mormon city. This time the stage pitched him sprawling with an avalanche of mail bags to sample the depths of the Sweetwater; it burst wide its after-boot and belched forth one trunk full of manuscripts. Greeley rescued his traveling bag, while the lead team came prancing back in a tangle, as though to climb aboard the derelict stage and teach the swearing driver to be more careful of his language in cases of emergency like this. The mail, of course, was recovered in due time, being composed principally of free and worthless government documents. The trunk, however, had gone bubbling away and under. Greeley "traveled light" from then on. It was not by his pen that the name of any stage driver between Leavenworth and Hangtown was ever inscribed for the eyes of posterity—not even the name of Hank Monk.

But of his drive, from the heights of the Sierras down into Placerville, he did have something to say. His coach traveled "just as fast as four wild California horses, whom two men could scarcely harness, could draw it." Had this been so, of course, Greeley might never have lived to tell the tale and the world would have been spared its promiscuous propagation.

"Our driver was, of course, skillful," he goes on; "but had he met a wagon suddenly on rounding one of the sharp points or projections we were constantly passing, a fearful crash was unavoidable. Had his horses seen fit to run away . . . I know that he could not have held them, and we might have been pitched headlong down a precipice of a thousand feet. . . . Yet at this break-neck rate, we were driven not less than four hours or forty miles, changing horses every ten or fifteen, and raising a cloud of dust through which it was difficult at times to see anything. . . . And right glad was I [at last] to find myself among friends, surrounded by the comforts of civilization,

Outpost of Civilization on the "L. & P.P.E." sketch from *Beyond the Mississippi*, by A. D. Richardson, who traveled with Greeley.

Courtesy Bancroft Library



and with the prospects of occasional rest.”

Greeley's views and fancies with respect to this drive were very similar to those of the average overland traveler on first coursing the route of the Pioneer—this no matter what driver held the lines. The dangers encountered and miraculously escaped by the journalist were the perils that Monk had been dodging steadily for at least a year and would continue to avoid through some twenty years to follow. Still, no one can be spared the story of “Horace” and Hank— how “the coach bounced up and down in such a terrific way that it jolted the buttons off Horace's coat, and finally shot his head clean through the roof of the stage!”; how Horace then “yelled at Hank Monk and begged him to go easier”; how he said he “warnt in as much of a hurry as he was a while ago,” at which Hank Monk said, “Keep your seat, Horace, and I'll get you there on time—and you bet he did, too, what was left of him.”

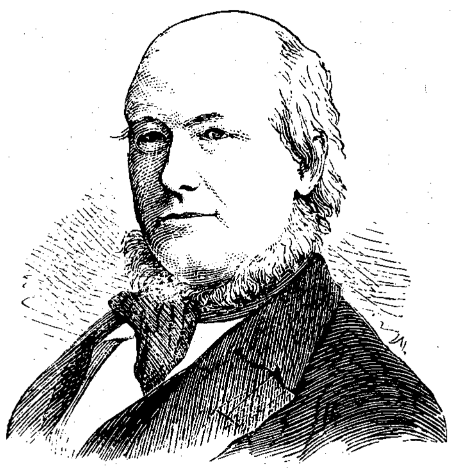
Having recounted this “very laughable thing” three times in succession, Mark Twain adds that the episode has also been recorded “by every other correspondence-inditing being that ever set his foot upon the great overland road between Julesberg and San Francisco.” Among those guilty he names Taylor, Richardson, Jones, Smith, Johnson, and Browne; but now further references may be made to Mark Twain, Bowles, Rice, Haskins, Root, Jarett, and, without question, a dozen or two more as well. Hank Monk, in his day, might have filled a scrap-book with drivel to arouse the envy of many a theatrical star. It was because one day he drove Greeley rather rapidly into Placerville.

Still, Greeley had been misused. “What was left of him” escaped from Monk's stage and the clutches of the Placerville reception committee, to hide, according to the press, in the nearest bar-room, or to be, according to Greeley, “among friends, surrounded by the comforts of civilization.” The old man, in fact, was more travel-worn and battered than any one could fully appreciate. But, having been discovered at the bar, he was rustled shortly to a banquet in his honor, where, in response to various toasts, he is said to have arisen from a couch instead of a chair. There were now, perhaps, more reasons than one why Greeley favored improvements along the Salt Lake road.

CHARLIE

“YOU'VE heard o' Hank Monk I reckon. . . .” Enough people had, at least, to have called forth this surmise by some writer for the “New York Sun,” although Monk's stamping grounds were distant three thousand miles.

One imagines that the old Jehu's renown must have arisen from something more than the one senseless incident so often rehashed. One is apt to presume that his glorification must have found nourishment through some other root—something so elemental and broadly recognized, perhaps, that it was never recorded, and thus allowed to drift by the boards. To a certain extent, indeed, this appears to be the case.



Courtesy Bancroft Library

Horace Greeley

It was July 30, 1858—exactly one year to the day before Greeley entered Placerville “on time”—that the arrival of Monk's stage at the selfsame town was cheered with even greater ado, and that his name, with a *Mister* and a *Henry* before it, appeared in suitable dignity on the front pages of various journals. It had been his honor, by chance or by special appointment, to bring the first coach mail by the Central Overland to its western terminus.

As a driver then in the employ of George Chorpenning his route was on the Pioneer road—the same road that knew the sound of his whip, and the streak of white smoke from his black cigar, thence onward through a period of at least twenty years. Thus, having become familiar with this historic line when it was little more than pack trail as adapted to wheels by old Crandall, he had seen it develop under the hoofs of his teams into one of the most inspiring sections of the Central Overland, and he had remained with it through the palmiest days of its career and onward until long after the advent of the first Pacific railroad.

Monk had a right, therefore, to a kind of distinction; but this particular kind his name has rarely enjoyed. It appears, curiously, that the real tap-root of his fame must rely, as though condemned to an unmerciful fate, upon the everlasting sustenance of the Greeley chestnut. The years were many, and the years were long, but it never failed to provide.

When, for example, Horace Greeley became a candidate for the Presidency of the United States, out ran another branch of this old reliable root, just as promptly as though it had been stimulated by the ever-ready ink of press agents. It was *still* a most “laughable thing.” Hank, it seems, had written to the candidate, recalling the memorable day when they had enjoyed a pleasant drive together, and suggesting that, in the event of election, some little token of esteem for past services be considered—some lucrative rocking-chair billet, perhaps. It was only fair. But to this request, it appears, the candidate had answered:

“I would rather see you ten thousand fathoms in hell than give you even a crust of bread. For you are the only man who ever had it in his power to put me in a ridiculous light before the American people, and you villainously exercised that power.”

Evidently Monk had contributed somewhat to the candidate's subsequent defeat. It was a just penalty. Greeley had aired his views on a certain score about which he knew practically nothing. Like many inexperienced stage travelers by the Central Overland, he had sampled the driving of a Sierra whip and regarded it, published it, broadcast it as a reckless procedure. Monk was not reckless. It was true, perhaps, sometimes he drank; sometimes, according to one of his volunteer press agents, he drank so much that he forgot what he was doing—gave whisky to his horses, and watered himself, thus becoming accidentally sober enough to handle an inebriated team.

But Monk was rather used to this sort of smiling slander; and, whatever the facts may be, his boast was, after twenty years' driving through the dangerous Sierra Nevadas, that he had never injured a passenger. There is little doubt but that he was just as cool and careful as he was deft and fast. It could scarcely have been otherwise. He was a veteran on the Pioneer line; he was one of the earliest and longest-tried of all the Sierra Knights.

“You've heard o' Hank Monk, I reckon. . . . Wa'al, there's fifty as good drivers as he ever was,” continues the “New York Sun” on the word of “a mountaineer.” And while the rest of the article suggests more fiction than fact, this much, at least, rings true.

Monk was one among many, but a chancing popular idol. His relation to his route, in the words of a Nevada newspaper man, was “what the perfume is to the rose, what Boker's bitters is to a cocktail”; and he was even likened to the salt on a scrambled egg—poor Monk! In his life he stood for more than was ever bargained for; but he was no less one of an expert group of drivers—Al Grinnel, Kaiser, Ned Blair, Curly Dan (B. B. Burch), David Taylor, J. J. Crowder, William Norris, C. B. Hoffman, A. Putnam, John Sickles, and many more of varying skill; but, though they were the rank and file of whips in that mountain zone, they were filling a demand for the greatest speed through a country where it was least expected; they were developing an old art toward its acme. Suffice it to say that Hank Monk was one of these.

THERE were other idols. J. Ross Browne tells of “Charlie.” Everybody, he says, knows Charlie. And “everybody” in Browne's time did know him well enough. Charlie was a type met everywhere. Browne was “proud and happy” to sit beside him on the coach—especially as the night came on with the deepest shadows, leaving the old Pioneer road and the dismal gorges beside it as indistinguishable as though a black carpet had been spread over all. Browne called it a “stage trap.”

"The horses seemed to be eternally plunging over precipices and the stage following them with a crashing noise, horribly suggestive of cracked skulls and broken bones. But," he writes, "I had implicit faith in Old Charlie. The way he handled the reins and peered through the clouds of dust and volumes of darkness, and saw trees and stumps and boulders of rock and horses' ears, while I could scarcely see my own hand before me, was a miracle of stage driving." As the stage made a sudden lurch in the dark and went streaming gracefully along the brink of a fearful precipice, Browne found breath to ask: "Do many people get killed on this route?"

"Nary a kill that I know of. Some of the drivers mashes 'em once in a while, but that's whiskey or bad drivin'. Last summer a few stages went over the grade, but nobody was hurt bad—only a few legs and arms broken. Them was opposition stages. Pioneer stages, as a genr'l thing, travels on the road. Get aeoup!"

"Is it possible? Why, I read horrible stories of people crushed to death going over these mountains."

"Very likely—they kill 'em quite lively on the Henness route. [California Stage Company's opposition to the Pioneer over a line later adopted by the Central Pacific Railway.] Git alang, my beauties! Drivers only break their legs a little on this route; that is, some of the opposition boys did it last summer; but our company's very strict . . . as a genr'l thing. . . . Git aeoup, Jake! Git alang, Mack! 'Twon't pay; 'taint a good investment for man nor beast. A stage is worth mor'n two thousand dollars, and legs cost heavy besides. You, Jake, git!"

"How in the world can you see your way through this dust?"

"Smell it. Fact is, I've traveled over these mountains so often I can tell where the road is by the sound of the wheels. When they rattle I'm on hard ground; when they don't rattle I gen'r'lly look over the side to see where she's a-going."

"Have you any other signs?"

" 'Backer's another sign; when I'm a little skeer'd I chew mor'n ordinary. Then I know the road's bad. . . ."

"How long have you been driving stage?"

"Nigh on thirty years. . . ."

"Why, you must have made plenty of friends during so long a career. . . ."

"Oh, yes, plenty of 'tm; see 'em today, gone tomorrow! Git alang!"

And so passed the long hours of the night, Charlie and his chronicler gossiping pleasantly about the risks and charms and the mysteries of the stage driver's profession. A hard life was that of the Jehu, he mused, "a life of exposure and peril, and wear and tear, such as few other men experienced in this world. You, my good friend," he writes, "who cross the Sierras of California once or twice in a lifetime, imagine you have done great things—you boast of your qualities as a traveler; you have passed unscathed through the piercing night air; have scarcely shuddered at the narrow bridges, or winced at the fearful precipices. You have braved all the dangers of the trip, and can afford to slap yourself complacently on the leg in proof of the fact that you are still sound. But think of Charlie! He has crossed the mountains a thousand times; crossed when the roads were at their worst; by night and by day; in storm and gloom and darkness; through snow and sleet and rain, and burning suns and dust; back and forth; subject to the risk of different teams and different stages; his life balanced on the temper of a horse or the strength of a screw. . . . All hail to thee, Old Charlie!"

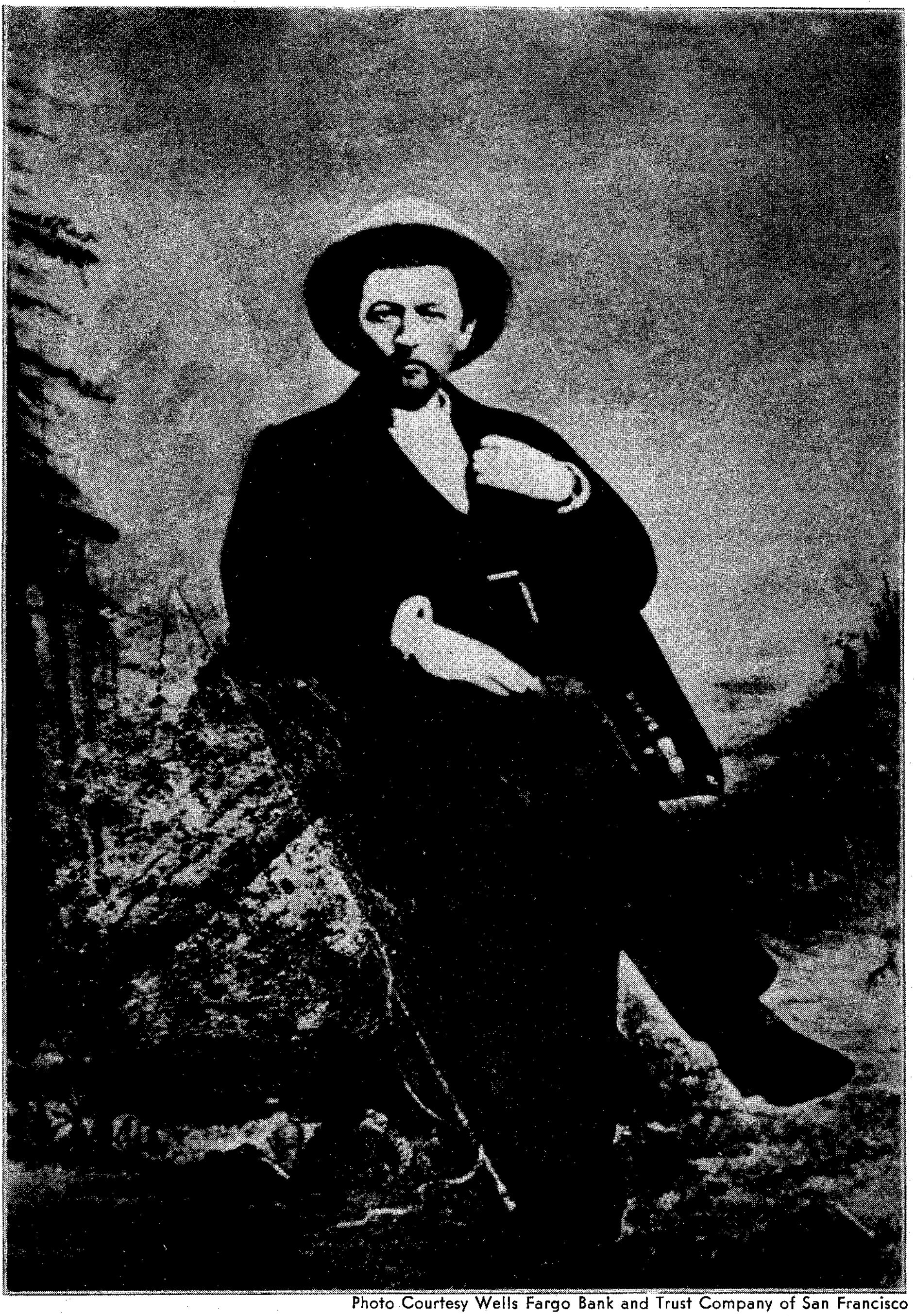


Photo Courtesy Wells Fargo Bank and Trust Company of San Francisco

Henry Monk, celebrated "Knight of the Sierras."

THE stage-coach was bound upward from Placerville to Strawberry and on ever an improved grade that skirted the shores of Lake Tahoe. It had come upon a hard gravelly earth where the hoofs were beating a lively drum refrain, now in chorus, now out again, at measured intervals, in constant rhythm. The tall pines formed a magnificent avenue through which the moon began to glimmer, making a fretwork of silver light on the backs of the animals. Then the beams poured down into a mysterious abyss through which the river was dashing. They fringed the top of the forests "with a frostlike drapery." Nothing could provide a greater thrill, Browne thought, than the many down-swoops and zooms of this grade by moonlight.

"Imagine yourself seated in front of the stage, by the side of that gallant old whipster, Charlie, who knows every foot of the way, and upon whom you can implicitly rely for the safety of your life and limbs. Holding the reins with a firm hand, and casting a penetrating eye ahead, he cracks his whip, and away go the horses with inspiring velcity—six magnificent chestnuts, superbly adorned with flowing manes and tails. The stillness of the night is pleasantly broken by their measured tread, and the rattle of the wheels over the gravel echoes through the wild rifts and opening of the cañon like a voice from the civilized world telling of human enterprise. Down and still down we plunge into the gloomy depths of the abyss; the ghostly forms of the trees looming up on our left; to the right, rising far beyond the range of vision, the towering heights of the Sierras; and ever and anon yawning gulfs in front and bottomless pits of darkness still threatening. . . .

"The road turns and winds like a serpent, sometimes apparently running into huge banks of granite boulders, then whirling suddenly and plunging into a shimmering wilderness of rocks and trees, where destruction seems inevitable. Yet onward dance the horses. . . . They never swerve from the track . . . they pursue their way with unrivalled ease and grace; sweeping around the narrow turns; now coursing along on the extreme edge of the precipice, or closely hugging the upper bank as the road winds to the right or the left; now plunging down and whirling with marvelous sagacity over the narrow bridges that span the ravines, often where there is neither rail nor post to mark the way, ever true to the slightest touch of the reins, and ever obedient to the voice of the driver. Is it any wonder that Old Charlie loves horses and talks of his team with a kind of paternal affection—that he knows them by heart, and holds converse with them through the long watches of the night?"

Later, out of Strawberry, in the higher altitudes of the Sierras, the scenery became weird. The earth was of a whitish cast, trees scraggly. Great boulders reared above the wayside, threatening to topple over and crush all beneath them—"thousands of tons of solid stone ready, apparently, at the slightest vibration . . . to come crashing down upon the stage."

"And the verdict of the coroner's inquest 'ud be," said the driver, "eighteen men, six horses, an' a Pioneer stage smashed by the above stone!"

Passengers' teeth began to chatter "like a box o' dice," but the assurance came that those rocks were perfectly safe. Perfectly safe. It was only when the stage came along that they vibrated or rocked a little bit.

He began to hum and sing: "When this cruel war is over . . ." He knew only one line of only one song, which Browne had the honor of hearing "over a thousand times."

"When this cruel war is over. . ."

WHAT particular Old Charlie is referred to, Browne does not tell. There were a number of them who went by the name—Charlie Crowell, Charlie Watson, Charlie Saddle, "Coon Hollow Charlie"—all well-known whips of the Pioneer in Browne's time. But at one period or another there was one more: Charlie Pankhurst. If Browne's "Old Charlie" happened to have been Pankhurst (and there is no available source to gainsay the possibility), here was one that everybody did not know.

It is true that most drivers were enigmas. Their life histories were not for the world. When they talked—and many of them would not talk except to their teams—any sincere confidence from them could be taken as the highest compliment. Otherwise they were drolly insincere, spinning yarns to be taken with bushels of salt—salt which they frankly passed around for application. Their own lives were strictly their own; and it was exceptionally true of Charlie Pankhurst.

Among the many historic instances of women disguised as men playing the man's part through various masculine walks of life, Charlie Pankhurst contributes a strange case to the annals of staging. From a day in the early forties when she, as a small girl, escaped in boy's clothes from a poorhouse, until shortly after her death at the age of sixty-seven years, her sex was never disclosed, perhaps never suspected.

With a career among drivers of sixes to be envied, Pankhurst was one of the most popular whips of New England long before the gold fever began to call them away. From the poorhouse to the stables of Ebenezer Balch in Worcester, she had taken the first step of a life in masquerade. And she had laughed to herself, no doubt, when, as a "boy," Mr. Balch had offered to make a man of her. Clothes made the man, she learned very early, and went to work pitching hay, shoveling manure, washing carriages, scrubbing floors, and so on, with such energy and good-will that when at last Mr. Balch moved into the What Cheer House of Providence, Rhode Island, he took the youth with him and taught "him" how to drive. It was two, four, and finally six horses—six in a country where the full complement was no ordinary sight.

But by that time, neither was she any ordinary driver. Having wandered away from Providence and back again, and continued all the time in the practice of her chosen art, she could command from any employer the best team that he owned and be sure to get it, lest some other employer win her. The wealthiest families, when in need of a stable team, wanted also Charlie Pankhurst. They could depend on her for a pleasurable trip; and her handling of a certain six spanking grays had become one of the spectacles of the town. They were horses that she would allow no hands to touch but her own; and they failed to acknowledge her master over them only once.

It was on a dreadfully cold night while returning with a coach-load from a dance at Pawtuxet. The horses had been obliged to stand too long, and their driver to wait outside in the snow until her hands were mere gloves stuffed with inert fingers. The cavorting team, pulling out at last had probably detected her difficulty. Haybound, home-bound, the animals were off, Charlie, with more than a dozen lives in her half-frozen hands, unable to check them. Probably one of the most humiliating acts of her life was now when she enlisted the strength of the man beside her to handle the two lead reins.

Her friends in these early days were among the drivers destined to become the most outstanding stagemen of the Pacific Coast. Birch and Stevens, having known her well, had likewise admired her as an expert whip; for no sooner had they become established in California than they sent for her, and soon employed her among their drivers. When the streets of Sacramento were swarming with miners and blocked by vehicles and mustang teams, when runners were crying out their routes and all men swearing as they would never have sworn save to accompany this grand male chorus, Charlie was there, somewhere among them, rubbing hubs with the next fellow, trying to sober her animals while the clamoring hordes, with their shovels and guns, piled aboard.

She was broad shouldered, tall, compactly built, and with a complexion, naturally dark, bronzed by the sun. When she called "All aboard!" even her voice could have aroused no great suspicions—it was a strong, masculine falsetto, not very uncommon among men. What may have been whispered behind her back is not of record; but admiration for her skill and daring was broadcast.

Thomas Edwin Farish, author of "The Gold Hunters," having driven with Charlie Pankhurst, gives several examples of this.

He recalls her coolness at one time on crossing a bridge of the swollen Tuolumne River—a bridge that began to reel and rock over a deep churn of water. Her team was walking at the time; but as the structure began to go down she laid on the whip, and reached the other shore only as the timbers and planks behind fell crashing into the stream. Then, of course, she betrayed few if any emotions, being, as she was, a driver; but once when stopped by highwaymen, it seems she did become angry. At the point of a gun she had been obliged to throw out the express box.

"I wasn't thinking," she said, "of this. But the next time you try to stop me, I'll be ready for you."

And the next time, indeed, she was. Farish writes: "She shot the leader [of the road-agents], applied the lash to her horses and escaped without harm. The body of the highwayman was found by a searching party in an old tunnel near the scene of the shooting." The details are not of available record, but the story is borne out well enough through an obituary item in the papers: ". . . Pankhurst was a noted whip, and of courage once proved conclusively in a fight with highwaymen."

Through most of her career she drove over various roads of California, and, ranking with Charlie Watson and Monk as expert, she was numbered at one time among the select whips of the Sierras. Only during the last few years of her life, when ill health prevented, did she cease to drive. She died unattended and alone in a little cabin on the Moss Ranch, six or seven miles from Watsonville, during the last week of 1879. Friends, coming to call, discovered the remains, also the strange fact of her sex. There were newspapers then that refused to believe it. Others held that it was "too strange not to be true"; but it was likewise too strange not to be investigated, substantiated, and chronicled broadly from the Pacific to the Atlantic States.

Charlie Pankhurst, like Monk, through rather curious chance, has left a few more intimate traces behind than other worthy drivers of the pioneer school were able to do. But they were all so similar that to know one was to be well acquainted with them all. Charlie! "Of course everybody knows Charlie," Browne writes, "that same old Charlie all over the roads."

THE QUIXOTIC PONY

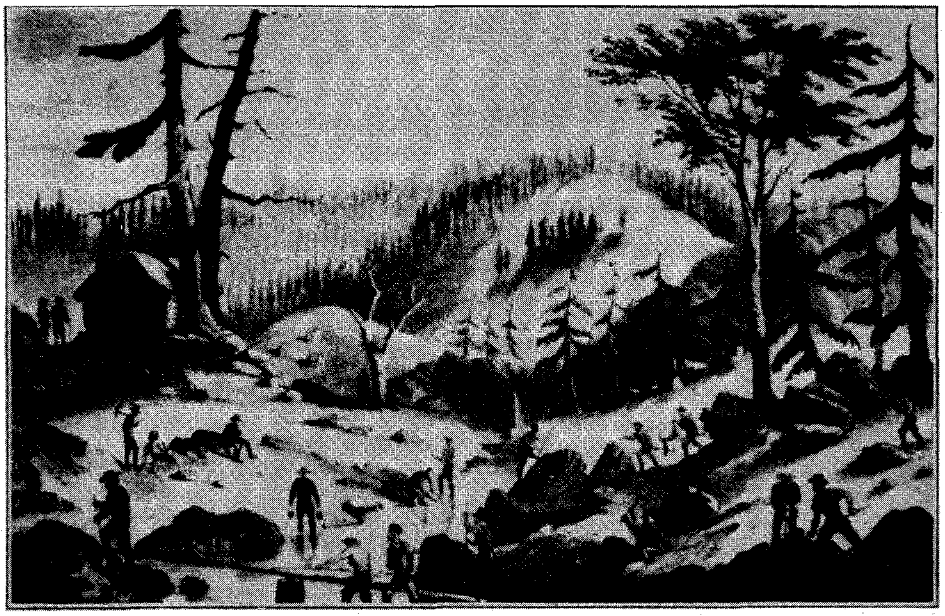
WHEN the Postmaster-General's axe of retrenchment crashed down (June 30, 1859) upon all overland mails but the Butterfield line, there was the able firm of Russell, Majors & Waddell ready to receive the blow and, in spite of it, to carry on and improve what Hockaday & Company had started a year before between Salt Lake and the Missouri River. There was also George Chorpenning, operating over the route west of Salt Lake; but he could not last; he was already staggering. He had had little more than enough strength left in him to put Horace Greeley across the alkali plains and deliver him to Placerville "on time."

Still, with a stubborn pluck and hopes of a brighter day, Chorpenning went on to improve his line, to blaze new trails especially, and shorten the distance. His stages between California and the Mormon capital were already dropping Salt Lake to the north, and awaiting only the completion of a new road south of the dreary Humboldt to initiate the permanent trail for a coming era. With the same spirit, too, he continued the weekly trips, though his remuneration for mail carriage was only for semi-monthly service ($80,000 instead of $135,000 per year). He ran thus until, with the fall of the year 1859, creditors began to foreclose, and the sheriff to sell off his stock.

Even then he continued to stagger. With no stages left on his western division—from "Hangtown" to Gravelly Ford—he borrowed one, and caused it to appear at the Placerville post office as usual. He might have struggled on for some time in this unaccountable manner; but the case provoked curiosity and investigation. Somebody spied and tattled. It seemed that the borrowed stage-coach ran only to some proximate point of concealment where the mail was sedulously transferred to pack-mules and driven away!

It was scarcely in accord with the government contract. The local postmaster of Placerville, unable to countenance the procedure, felt obliged to make temporary arrangements with another firm—Brady & Company, the successors of Crandall & Sunderland to the Pioneer. Louis Brady, with hopes of favorable recognition in Washington, now hastily extended the old line to Salt Lake.

Still Chorpenning would not admit defeat. Nor would the Salt Lake postmaster acknowledge Brady (a Gentile) as a bona-fide mail carrier on the route. Theoretically there were two stage systems between Placerville and the Mormon city, each one being recognized only at an opposite terminus. Conflicts and failures followed. They foreshadowed the end. It came with the close of fifty-nine, when the contract was annulled in Washington. California, with connections by stage on the Salt Lake route only as far as the Washoe silver mines of western Nevada, was to see no further action until the following spring; but then it was action indeed.



In the Diggin's. (Illustration from *Mountains and Molehills* by Frank Marryat.)

PRIVATE CAPITAL had come to the rescue in the name of Russell, Majors & Waddell. Private enterprise had conceived the now famous "Pony Express."

"Away across the endless dead level of prairie a black speck appears in the sky. . . . In a second or two it becomes a horse and rider, rising and falling, rising and falling—sweeping toward us nearer and nearer, and the flutter of hoofs comes faintly to the ear—another instant and a whoop and a hurrah . . . a wave of the rider's hand, but no reply, and a man and horse burst past our excited faces, and go sweeping away like a belated fragment of storm.

"So sudden is it all, and so like a flash of unreal fancy, that but for a flake of white foam left quivering and perishing on a mail sack, we might have doubted whether we had seen any horse and man at all . . ."

And by the same token, moreover, we might doubt it still. There appears to be more truth than mere pony expression in this galloping sketch from Mark Twain. Like a flash of fancy, but with a flake of white foam to dispute the illusion, was the institution itself—was the entire career of the Overland Pony Express.

It did not involve more than 150 round trips. It did not cover a full nineteen months. Like a belated fragment of storm it came and was gone.

Yet the fact remains: a more glamorous contribution to our historic West than that of this ephemeral Pony would be difficult to name. Within his brief lifetime—a mere flare in the earliest sixties—he was able to identify himself with the new empire as permanently as though he had come racing up all the way from the gold rush to the last spike driven for the Pacific Railroad; as prominently as though he had carried every scrap of communication that California had ever enjoyed, as ineffably as though he were indeed the very trail blazer of the Salt Lake or Central route, the sole champion of its eventualities, the one and only precursor of the first daily stage, and of the first iron horse to go blowing itself across the continent!

It is curious—scribes, in regular relays, have been riding the tolerant animal for nearly seventy years, and have happily disregarded his excuse for living rather more often than not. He has become an immortal Pegasus, striking sparks from his hoofs, and beating out thunder from the rosy top of a cloud—a thing apart, an unapproachable pet of the gods, great for the very fact of his being. Perhaps it were a sacrilege to bid him come down, forget the romance of his life for a moment, and give some general account of himself—his intrinsic value.

The Pony, however, has no few practical-minded admirers. They have many times spoken in his behalf, sometimes with a rather scholarly air. The animal's most vital contribution to the world, they say, is not the most obvious thing. His services as a carrier of mail and other dispatches constituted but a means toward an end.

By way of enlightenment, they recall the administration in force at the time of his début (April 3, 1860). It was still that of Buchanan; there was still the old force of truckling politicians behind it. Despite the retrenchments of fifty-nine, the government program called for nearly five times the annual expenditure for stage service over the Southern routes that was appropriated for the same in the

North, or over the Central. The latter, in short, was in need of a powerful champion—something to run independent of Federal aid, and that might not be forced to the wall by sectional interests, that would advertise to the world the thorough feasibility of the short line for all purposes.

Here, then was the Pony's great motive; and there can be no mistake as to that. Relying wholly upon the capital of the new staging firm of Russell, Majors & Waddell, and upon what scant returns could be realized through public patronage, the little animal set out to broadcast the merits of the Central route, to swing popular opinion with such force against political opposition as to compel an immediate reform—congressional action for a first-class line of stages by way of Salt Lake, a telegraph system, and eventually perhaps a railroad.

All this, according to many writers, the Pony actually brought about; and certainly a more conspicuous exhibition of his route's advantages could scarcely have been hoped for. He could not have done better. But it happened simply that he might have spared himself the exertion. His demonstration, as it may be shown, chanced to be wholly unnecessary. He neither caused nor hastened the developments that followed in his trail. Had he never existed, all must have been the same.

ONE might fairly disregard the fact that stages had coursed the Central route some time before the Pony; that the Pioneer over the Sierras had been running with increasing regularity and success ever since Crandall's historic venture in the summer of fifty-seven, and that Chorpenning and Hockaday had rolled one severe winter under their wheels with such grace that even the prejudiced Postmaster-General (Brown) had acknowledged the commendable service. It might all be disregarded but for the affray in Congress immediately after these Central stagemen had survived their first winter; for then it was that proponents of the short line were thus able to find unqualified support for their arguments, and that they fought hopefully, with no Pony to ride on, for substantial improvements on the Salt Lake line.

That they failed (along with the annual Post-Office Bill) was to have been expected. Still, their campaign in the following year for a daily coach mail left no doubt as to their growing strength. It was all but a victory this time, and significantly, it was in spite of the fact that the Pony, though now on the road, had not yet encountered a *winter*. Since it had to be proved that the route was practicable through *all* seasons of the year, something besides the Pony must already have suggested it.

So much for the part played by the stage on the Central without benefit of the Pony. There had yet to be a decisive victory in Congress. It was still within the Pony's power, then, to compel success. For one thing, his enemies were weakening. No sooner had he started to run than there came a breach in the Democratic party, making it clearly impossible for the Southern branch of it to carry the election in November. Nevertheless, there would be overland measures to debate once more before the Southern régime would be over, and there would be a winter before that time, a good chance for an effective demonstration.

So *still* there remained an opportunity for the animal to prove his worth. He'd keep the road hot. He'd give them plenty to talk about at the next opening of Congress. Off and away he flew. What wheels could do, hoofs might not prove; but that was immaterial. He could win friends; he could draw eyes; he could perform some marvelous tricks. There was his mission! *Argumentum ad populum!* An advertising agent was the Pony.

He ran weekly at first—and at a rate of nearly two thousand miles in ten days. Who had ever heard of such a thing since Kubla Khan! His biweekly trips commenced with summer. The frequency of service was that of the Great Southern Overland; but the speed! He could beat those Butterfield coaches in the South by eleven, twelve, sometimes thirteen days! Bring on your winter! Bring on the deep, impassable snows! He'd lambaste the hostile faction with some of its own pretty snowballs!

But already this faction had reason to worry about other things. Not only was the Democratic party split hopelessly in half, but it was known by September, beyond a reasonable doubt, that Lincoln would be the next President. The governors of the Cotton States had convened and decided what to do when the expected election occurred; and it was practically agreed at this time that if one State should secede, all would secede. South Carolina took note. The Pony ran on. Come winter! Come winter! Hurrah!

On November 6 he stood at St. Joseph with his ears back, waiting for the news. Legislators of South Carolina, having cast a hopeless vote for Breckinridge electors, remained in session to hear the results for the nation.

Lincoln elected! Fast hoofs were off with the news. Within six days and seventeen hours they had traversed the Central route. Lincoln elected! Buchanan's days were numbered. The Southern régime was doomed.

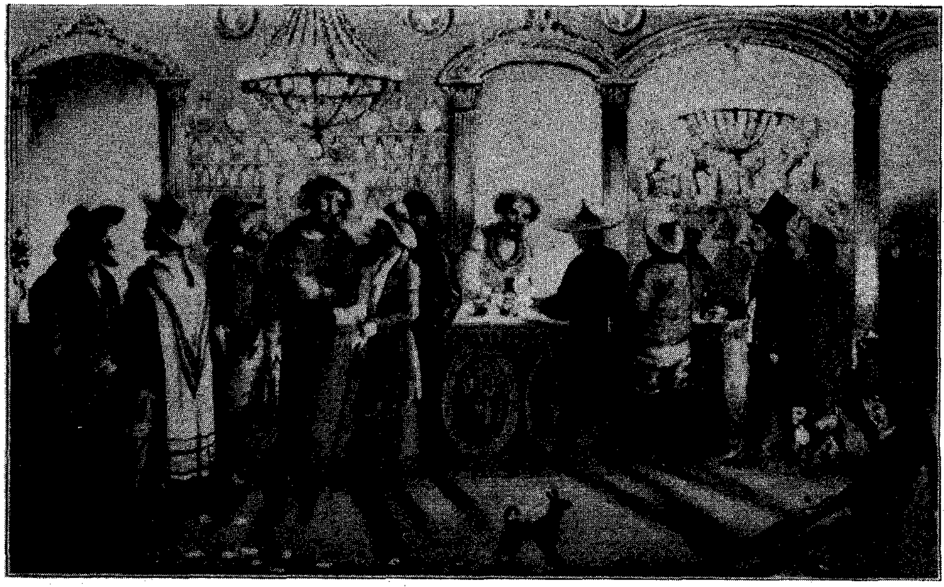
Thus winter had come for the Pony, and Lincoln with it, the President-elect. What now of the powers hostile to the Central route? They were not through yet, but by the time the express had delivered Buchanan's last annual message (December), there was little left in the Southern camp to care one way or another about that demonstration. Members of Buchanan's cabinet had already resigned; and, before the month was done, South Carolina had seceded.

In rapid sequence six other States followed suit, their representatives and senators withdrawing, one after another, from the national capital. The first shots were fired early in January (from the shore batteries of Charleston Harbor); and it was during a perfect furor in Washington that the measure for a daily line of stages over the Central was again introduced. There was little to oppose it. The Pony was advertising his honey to a hive of bees.

In fact, before the bill was passed, the Southern route of Butterfield had been cut off through Texas. The only rival of the Salt Lake line was out of the picture and beyond consideration, much of it belonging to a "Confederate States of America." The United States, if she cared to spend money on any overland route whatever, was obliged, compelled to look northward, and to spend it all on her own!

Thus winter had come and a few new circumstances with it. Early spring found an unmistakable civil war in progress. The beating of pony hoofs and the rattle of coach wheels could not resound above the thunder of muskets and cannon. A bill had been rushed through Congress for a daily mail on the Central route. The stages and stock of Butterfield & Company, led by the forces of the North, as it were, and fairly fleeing the fire of

Where gold-dust was liquefied. (Illustration from *Mountains and Molehills* by Frank Marryat.)



the South, were in a fair stampede northward toward the one and only alternative route that could be recognized. In so far as the cause of the Salt Lake line was involved, its enemies as well as its friends were acting in accord.

Thus daily stages commenced rolling where the Pony ran; lines of telegraph wires were being hastened faster than ever from both ends along his approximate trail. Nor was the Pacific Railroad Bill apt to remain long dormant, now that the North was no longer opposed.

The Pony may have paused for a moment in his dusty tracks and stared at this amazing action; but even his little horse-sense of modesty must have told him that, in spite of his good intentions, his capabilities, his heroic battle, and his big advertising campaign, he was not quite responsible for it all. He had carried the news of Lincoln's election, yet he had not elected Lincoln. It had all been pathetically destined to happen without his help; and he had hastened the inevitable only if his hoofs had kicked down Fort Sumter and started the Civil War.

What he actually did for the world, therefore, to forget the romance once more, was only the obvious thing. He carried letters.

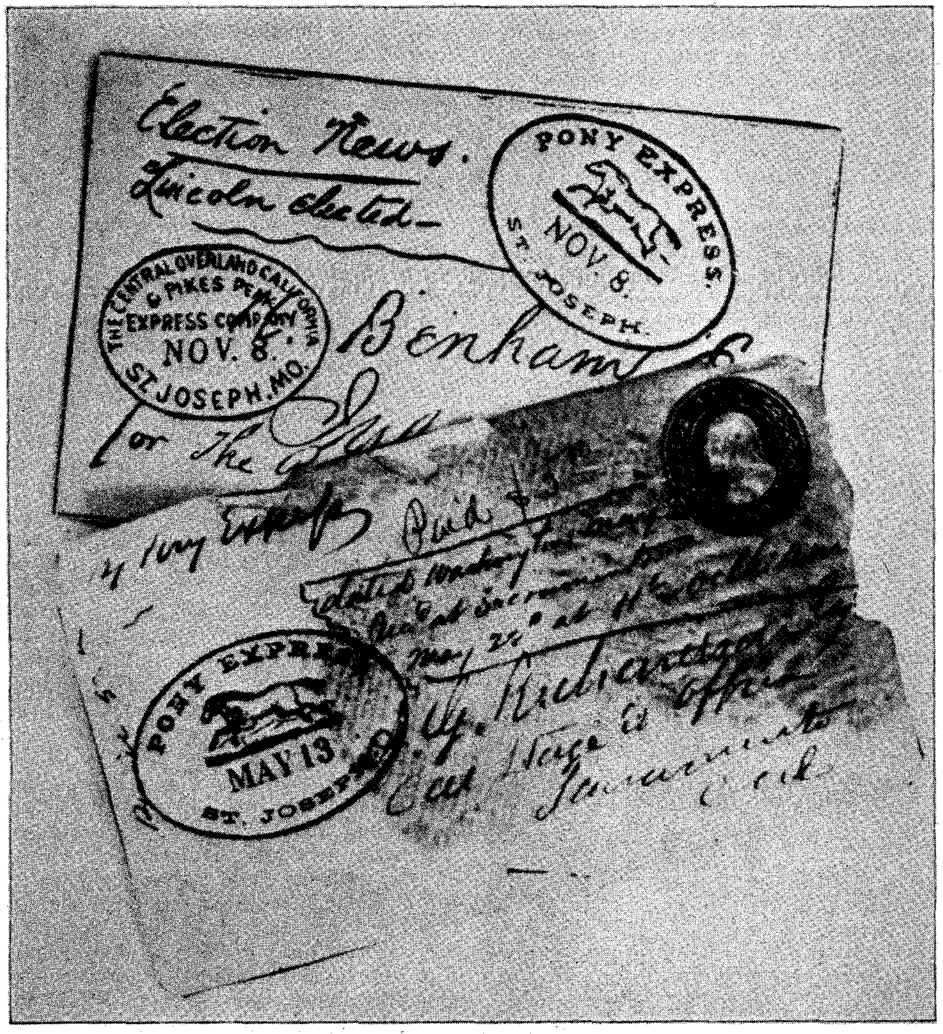
HE carried letter mail for a short time across the plains, and filled the diminishing gap between telegraph terminals with all the dispatch that good men and beasts could make possible. His average cargo from start to finish constituted about 100 letters—not very many considering the fact that 6,300, roughly, or at least, had been the ordinary cargo of letter mail by the Southern overland stages in the Pony's time; as many in a week, ofttimes, in these coaches as were known to the Pony's entire career. He was not a popular carrier.

But he was a very popular beast. For, while few could afford his rates of delivery ($5, $3, and $1 as they varied per *half-ounce tissue-paper letters in the* course of time), not only did he cut the time of the Southern stages in half as a habit, but he delivered news items for the press; and it would be difficult to appreciate in modern times what a luxury this service seemed to the settlements of the plains and to California.

Thus he filled one common want; but considering at what price it was filled—a million dollars, it appears, as a direct loss to the Pony proprietors—even this was more in the nature of a luxury. Certainly it was not an exigency. The Far West had waited nearly ten years for a transcontinental telegraph line. As a substitute for this (pathetic thought!) the Pony served little more than eighteen months. Surely the country could have waited this much longer without suffering material damage, glad though it was to use the Pony while somebody else paid the bills.

Pony Express envelopes of '60 and '61.

Photo Courtesy Mrs Frank S. Stevens and Hon. Greene Majors



Thus the great Central Overland Pony Express appears to dissolve from a vital agent in the building of an empire to a casual benefactor of a small minority and a short-lived popular luxury. Perhaps fame never graced an existence more futile.

Yet fame was his, and may ever remain so. Nor can it be said that he did *not earn it*, that he does *not* deserve his immortality. Not only did he make an ambitious attempt, which might have been a triumph had the war not stolen his thunder, but he achieved a national romance. He exploited the daring and hardihood of the youth in his realm, for which alone there may still be a debt in his honor and the price of his glory to pay.

What of all practical attainments in the light of this? Granting the animal all the conquests tacked on to his flowing tail, his material accomplishments would become immaterial alongside of him. As fearless as the great *Don Quixote* himself, he attacked a windmill—or a grindstone which was the world; and though he neither increased nor decreased its monotonous speed, the world had a right to marvel. It were a marvelous trick at any time to make a grindstone spin out some romance.

THE PONY'S PIPER

THUS, what benefits were born of the Pony Express is a question better left unasked if the entertainment of a nation is not enough. It was a drama which, under the direction of William H. Russell, its author, first appeared in the great theatre of the Wild West on April 3, 1860, and endured a run, night and day of more than a year and a half.

The settings were of the plains and deserts, the Rocky Mountains and Sierra Nevadas. There was color in war-paint and feathers. There were scenes of buffalo herds, solid masses, extended as a low tufted mesa bending over the horizon; scenes of granite mountains, icy crags where the trails thinned away under the frayed brush of cloud. There were scenes of flooding rivers and torrents, driving rain, giddy whirls of snow and sleet or tumbling hailstones. And through all of this went pattering the hoofs of the Pony.

Besides a fleet five hundred horses, the whole troop involved more than tenscore young men, or boys in some cases, well able to take a man's part. There were Bob Haslam ("Pony Bob"), Jim Moore, Howard Egan, and, of course, the fourteen-year-old Bill Cody. There were Frey, Randall, Roff, Hamilton, "Boston," Kelly, Richardson, Keetley, Beatly, Boulton, and many more—eighty picked rough riders in all. It was fairly an all-star cast; and the work demanded it. Blood was shed, and nerves were tried, then as now for entertainment. This was no mere horse-play; but it was, nevertheless, a kind of charity bazaar staged at the expense of Russell, Majors & Waddell.

The third member, William B. Waddell, it appears, was innocent of the flapdoodle involved. His most substantial contribution to the pageant was perhaps his name. Nor should the sound business judgment of Majors be hastily impugned —certainly the big Pony show was no example of it. He fostered it because he felt honorably compelled to do so.

His assets amounted to several millions —capital earned, for the main part, independent of his partners and through the struggles and physical perils of half a lifetime. But place it all beside a principle, and to him the money appeared as the proverbial trash. He seems to have been, moreover, one example of Christian gentleman who, receiving a blow on one cheek, could actually turn the other—something he demonstrated rather clearly in the case of the Pony.

Alexander Majors, born in 1814, was a native of Kentucky, but raised from the age of four on the Missouri frontier. As a youth he had been taught to accept the literal word of the Bible; and his strict codes and creeds, even as a young man, were so stringent that he could scarcely make them compatible with the life he desired on the plains. Straitened circumstances on the farm, however, turned him westward to the wilderness. Thence onward through many years his story holds too trite a moral to be told without certain misgivings; nor does it express to this age the man he was.

As a freighter over all the land from the great rivers to the Rocky Mountains, in any event, he neither drank, smoked, nor used profanity; he attempted to enforce sobriety upon his employees; observed his Sabbath in the devil's own stamping grounds and, with his slogging oxen, big wagons, mules and men, marched straightway to success!

During his prospering days he is said to have received a telegram from a remote wire terminal of the plains. It was from one of his train-masters. A wagon had been bogged. The mules were nearly exhausted. The men were discouraged. The one great need, and the only hope, was to swear! Could he swear just once? The request was granted, with the proviso that he do his swearing where neither man nor mule could hear him.

On another occasion a young man applied for employment.

"Can you drive a team?" Majors asked him.

"Can I drive a team? Why, I can drive a team to hell and back!"

Mr. Majors considered the case. Unfortunately, he told the man, he was not doing business with His Satanic Majesty this year, and did not expect to freight in that direction for at least some time to come.

MAJORS, by now, had become a great government contractor; he supplied nearly all of the military posts west of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers; he controlled practically all of the freighting on the plains. It is no wonder that he didn't swear. Perhaps there had never been a real occasion to do so; but a time was about to come when there would be at least the occasion. It was early in 1860, when William H. Russell, a partner of several years, first approached him on the subject of the Pony Express.

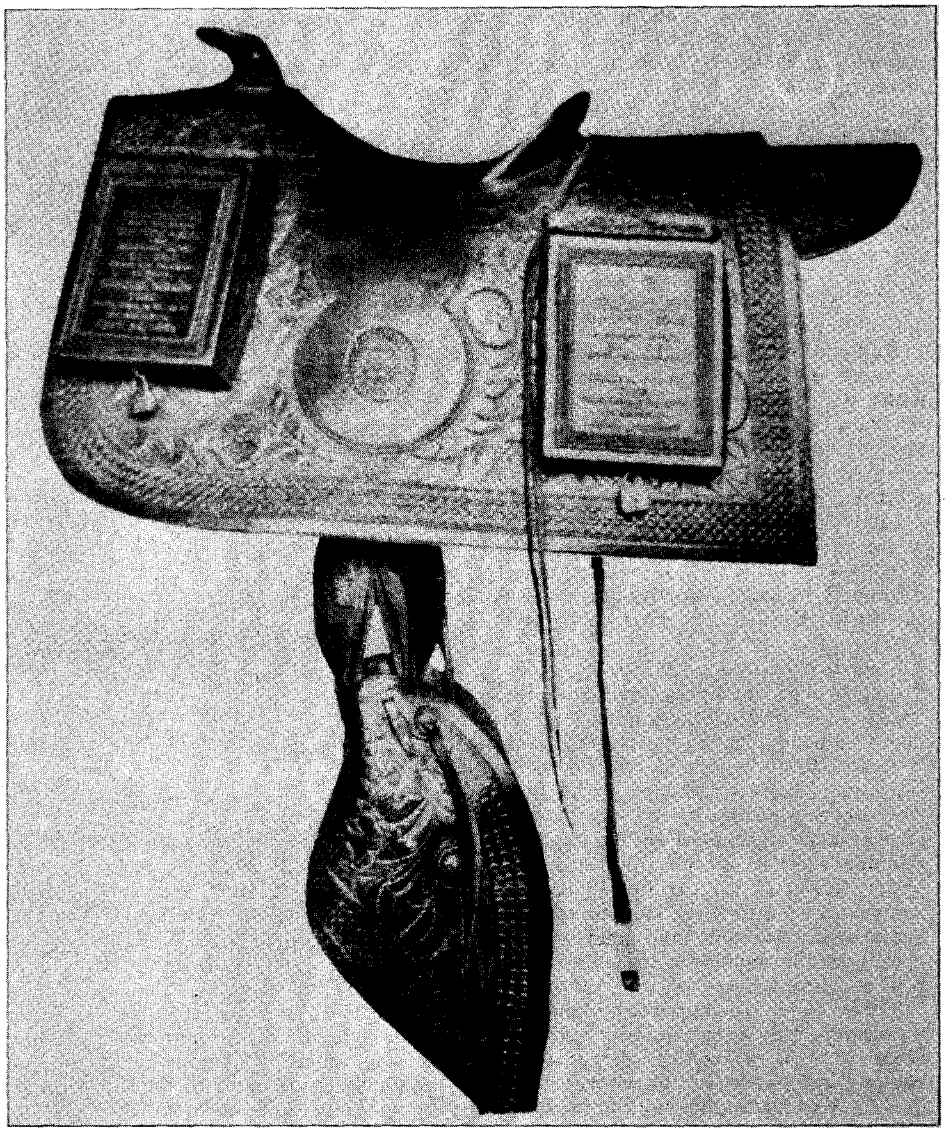


Photo Courtesy Hon. Greene Majors and **The Sunset Magazine**

Special saddle with attached mail pouches used by The Pony Express.

Russell, it seemed, had given the invulnerable word of the firm to the effect that the Missouri River would be joined to California by a weekly or biweekly relay system of horses, to cover a distance of nearly two thousand miles on a schedule of nine or ten days. Senator Gwin had accepted the word at its well-known value. There was money behind it so long as Majors was behind it. Now Majors was hearing for the first time what was already being broadcast to the world—he was joint proprietor in this extravagant enterprise.

Russell's Follies had appeared on the plains before. There had been a certain traveling show, a stage-coach romance known as the "Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express," put on the road in April of fifty-nine for the benefit of the Rocky Mountain gold-rushers. Its success had seemed to depend on the elasticity of a mining bubble. Majors had refused to have anything to do with it. Yet Russell, against all protests, had taken his bull by the horns. With a partner, John S. Jones of Missouri, he had organized a company in February, and, independent of the old firm, undertaken the enterprise on the strength, it appears, of a note "payable in ninety days," given and secured by Jones & Russell.

Then ninety days had passed. To save Russell, the old company had been obliged to come to his rescue—to take over the road show of Jones & Russell and encumber itself with a project whose only hope of salvation had appeared along lines of expansion. Toward this end the firm had then relieved Messrs. Hockaday & Company of their burdensome line, taking over the mail contract on May 11, and, with some elaborate improvements during the summer, operated it over the old Platte route between Atchison, Kansas, and Salt Lake City. "The Central Overland California & Pike's Peak Express" became the elaborate title of the original follies revamped. And now, in order to save the whole, along had come Russell with his Pony.

The need of more Federal support for the Salt Lake stages, the need to pound home to a Southern administration the advantages of the Central route, and the possibility that a horse express might, through its spectacular demonstration, achieve something of the sort, was all clear enough to Majors, the practical plainsman who had done business with the Government now for nearly thirty years. But, by the same token of experience, it was no less clear that the Pony would eat up about ten dollars to every one dollar made.

Had the company been paid the million or more which, it appears, the Government still owed on a certain freighting contract incident to the Mormon Rebellion, then the firm proper, rather than the firm in name, might have been able to stand with cash behind the enterprise. As it was, and indeed ever would be, the purse of Majors (in the name of the firm) could be resorted to. Fortunately, he had it to lose. Unfortunately, he had to lose it. Russell had given his word.

IT ALL seems as a melodrama today; but it was convincing realism at the time. One hundred thousand dollars in gold had been spent at the outset to make it real; $75,000 was the cost a few months later when there was added a wild Indian raid. Seven station keepers lost their lives in that act; stations were burned, a formidable section of the route was completely devastated. Later there were other raids and counter-attacks. Russell's big show was a thriller; and loud were the cheers as the various actors took up the role of hero.

"Pony Bob" Haslam was among those to assume the part. He appeared in a scene of arid waste, the desert Carson region, where winds blew white with sand and alkali. Indians had played havoc along the road; and he had reached the end of his route only to take up the burden of another rider's fear by traveling a second. Returning, he met with the necessity of doubling again, a burnt station with charred human remains compelling him this time. Three hundred and eighty-four miles, with but nine hours' rest intervening, he had ridden through this perilous country in order to exact the schedule of the Pony mail.

Jim Moore appears in a similar role. With an important dispatch from Washington, he had ridden over his route to Julesberg, where another dispatch was handed to him, his relief having been killed. Retracing his course, accordingly, he had covered without rest a course of 280 miles.

The many parts supposed to have been played by the boy William Cody are known too well—his 390-mile ride, on one occasion, with stops only for meals and fresh mounts, every station on the route entered on time!—or the incident in which he caused his horse to lunge, knock down two highwaymen, and make off; or his fabulous encounters with Indians, and so on. Some legends sprang up around the Pony show; some fiction gave wings to facts. With respect to some of these Pony riders, some paper-back hokum is still parading as history and some history, perhaps, as paper-back hokum. Another generation of sorting and sifting may be needed to segregate it all. Few alleged acts, at any rate, in the whole performance can be compared with that one ascribed to Wild Bill Hickok in the "Autobiography of Buffalo Bill," "by Colonel W. F. Cody."

Photo Courtesy Hon. Greene Majors

Alexander Majors

Wild Bill, despite his great stature, is discovered as a Pony Express rider. He was, indeed, on the line; and he may have ridden at one time to fill an emergency—the autobiographer does not explain. Here, at any rate, he came, the yellow hair of him atumble about the rim of his hat and all but white with dust. His sharp eyes were fixed upon the relay station ahead—Rock Creek, where a fresh mount should have been waiting, but was not. Neither stock-tender nor the wife of the stock tender had responded to his warwhoops until, as he swung from the saddle, there sounded from within the cabin the woman's screams.

Wild Bill, like a tall Nordic giant, may have hesitated for an instant to identify certain scuffling noises above the wind in the cottonwood trees; but certainly he did not pause long. With the scream of the woman still whetting his nerves, and the sight of her husband sprawled lifeless in the dust, he sprang toward the cabin on the spur of an impulse—but stopped.

He drew and fired. One grizzly form of a white man crumpled down in the doorway. He fired again and crumpled one more. He sprang over his first two dead men, drew a fusillade from four live ones, emptied his gun in return and killed a second pair! With his knife he dispatched another. A rifle from the hands of a corpse on the floor sufficed for the sixth and last! "Five at least," tradition says (three according to one good authority), Wild Bill Hickok killed on that occasion!

The scene shifted with the shifting of the old Pony for the new. The unfortunate woman, an outraged victim of the gang, having been left with the newly arrived passengers of the overland stage, Hickok was again on the road. [This incident, like one other (to be noted hereafter) in these chronicles, finds no direct verification in the original sources. William E. Connelley of the Kansas Historical Society, having given the career of "Wild Bill" long and careful study, has told the authors that the story is essentially true, but that the killings of "Wild Bill" on this occasion numbered more nearly three.]

IT WAS a melodrama which, if not overdrawn by its advertisers, could have been scarcely convincing to the audience even of that day; but the Pony actors did well enough without being given these wild acrobatic roles; and the whole Pony chorus, as none may ever doubt, remains worthy of all the applause it received while on the road. Over prairies and flooding rivers, over stifling deserts of alkali, desolations of sand, rugged mountains of snow, nearly two hundred miles every twenty-four hours, nearly two thousand miles in ten days, nearly twice as fast as the stage-coach was the rate of travel.

Stations had been built from the eastern slopes of the Sierra Nevadas all the way to the Mormon capital, and there had been stations to stock and equip thence onward to St. Joseph, intervals between them averaging about fifteen miles. Each rider controlled the equipage of his three-station beat and covered, in any case of emergency, either one of the two routes adjoining. His changes from horse to horse occupied but an instant of time; and there was seldom but a few moments' delay in the shifting of riders. For protection against savages and outlaws, he carried his six-shooting Colts half-cocked, but did well enough in such times of plight to depend on the hoofs of his mount.

Storm weather found him in a complete suit of buckskin, hair outside to shed the rain. Every measure had been taken in behalf of lightness. He was a light man himself; his saddle was light, with mail pouches, four in number, overlaid in a manner to distribute the load. Nearly all accouterments had been manufactured especially for the service. Even his bowie-knife was unique in design—there was mercury in a tube along its snare which the force of inertia, lent by the blow, would bring smartly to the weapon's point, thus affording a timely extra weight instrument.

The horse express was nothing new to the world; the Pony methods in their essence were probably as old as Horsedom, but never, certainly, since the institution chronicled by Marco Polo had there been anything as elaborate, as perfect as this. There was applause from both sides of the continent. Well done, Haslam! Well done, Moore! Well done, Egan! Bravo! Hurrah for Russell! Author! Speech!

Russell's Follies!

Yet it was "what the people wanted," especially if they could have it free. But the purse of Alexander Majors was not inexhaustible. The Pony's receipts were estimated at $101,000, which left a total loss of at least a million, not counting interest on the investment.

The attitude of Majors is reminiscent, perhaps, of a certain old cast of Western pioneer to whom any casual expression of intention by him or even by a partner was, under certain rather commonplace circumstances, like a written contract signed and sealed. Appropriately enough it was on the strength of such a contract that there existed a Pony Express. The system demonstrated that word and bond were synonymous in the eyes of Majors.

Russell's Follies, indeed; but it was an Alexander Majors production, his "super-production," and one of the most impressive of our real Western dramas. Something more than show, more than utility or gold was behind the Pony.

The little animal continued his run until the wires were joined and the telegraph clicked him aside. In October of 1861 his season was spent. In a short time, too, about a million dollars' worth of stock comprising the whole Central Overland California & Pike's Peak Express had fallen into the outstretched hands of Ben Holladay.

Here was the end—Majors bankrupt. The members of the old firm went their several ways. The curtain fell to the tune of "Yankee Doodle"; and there was an ironic smile on the face of the Piper.

THE WHIP OF HOLLADAY

Well I know who'll take the credit—all
 the clever chaps that followed—
Came, a dozen men together—never
 knew my desert fears;
Tracked me by the camps I'd quitted,
 used the water-holes I'd hollowed.
They'll go back and do the talking.
 They'll be called the Pioneers!
KIPLING—*The Explorer*

BEN HOLLADAY climbs to the box of his stage-coach. Russell and Majors climb down. Ben Holladay sounds his whip with a report to be heard by posterity. Across the plains he goes bounding. There are special coaches for him, and scores of special teams—animals to be driven ofttimes to their ruin in the course of a single stage, a single stretch of ten or fifteen miles. From the Missouri River to California he covers a distance of nearly two thousand miles in twelve days and two hours, breaking the record of everything but the Pony Express. His bill in damages for the trip amounts to ten—some say twenty—thousand dollars. But it makes no difference.

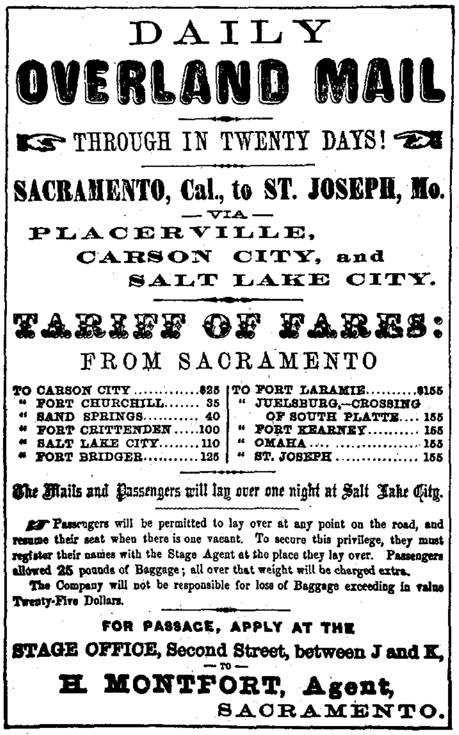
It made no difference to him. It was too small a thing in his life, like the emeralds and diamonds he sometimes wore, like his "Ophir Palace" and thousand acres on the Hudson, like the bronze lions at the door of his mansion in Washington, D. C., like the millions he made and the millions that made him, like the twenty-dollar gold piece he could toss out in a tip for his favorite "corn dodger," bacon, and beans.

He was, as William Russell had been before him, "The Napoleon of the Plains." He was, in the cultured mind of the financier Henry Villard, whom he faced on the day of his Waterloo, "illiterate, coarse, pretentious, boastful, false and cunning. . . . That a man of such character should have found it so easy to command millions in foreign capital was quite a puzzle and shock" to Mr. Villard. But in the mind of John Donaphin, who knew him better, Ben Holladay had faults of disposition and education, but he was "brave, strong, aggressive, talented and generous"; he was a man of "wonderful nerve and activity"; he was "one of God's gifted children. . . . Haughty and dictatorial, he was one of the most companionable of men. . . . Anxious to get the best of every bargain, he would often turn it, with all the profits, to some friend or deserving man. . . . He had faults, but desertion of friends was not one of them."

Ben Holladay—a Kentucky-born Missouri rustic, keeper of a dram shop, scout, frontier trader, merchant, stage monopolist, steamship magnate, railroad man, and political power in the country at large—was known to have operated at one time a stage route from Atchison to Salt Lake, another from Topeka to Denver, another from Omaha to Fort Kearney, and still others from Salt Lake to the mines of Montana and western Idaho, with various subsidiaries and branches—a total extent of about three thousand miles, with mail contracts bearing at a rate of more than one million dollars a year. A lively passenger business and a convenient freighting business and an express business and a shipping business—all these were contributing generously; and there was the friendship of President Lincoln for his protection. With coaches by the hundreds, horses and mules by the thousands, it was believed that his staging concern alone was the nation's, if not the world's, greatest enterprise ever owned and controlled by one man.

Advertisement from a directory of 1861.

Courtesy Bancroft Library



DAILY

OVERLAND MAIL

☞ THROUGH IN TWENTY DAYS! ☜

SACRAMENTO, Cal., to ST. JOSEPH, Mo.

—VIA—

PLACERVILLE,
CARSON CITY, and
SALT LAKE CITY.

TARIFF OF FARES:

FROM SACRAMENTO

TO CARSON CITY	$25	TO FORT LARAMIE	$155
" FORT CHURCHILL	35	" JUELSBURG,—CROSSING OF SOUTH PLATTE	155
" SAND SPRINGS	40	" FORT KEARNEY	155
" FORT CRITTENDEN	100	" OMAHA	155
" SALT LAKE CITY	110	" ST. JOSEPH	155
" FORT BRIDGER	125		

The Mails and Passengers will lay over one night at Salt Lake City.

☞ Passengers will be permitted to lay over at any point on the road, and resume their seat when there is one vacant. To secure this privilege, they must register their names with the Stage Agent at the place they lay over. Passengers allowed 25 pounds of Baggage; all over that weight will be charged extra.

The Company will not be responsible for loss of Baggage exceeding in value Twenty-Five Dollars.

FOR PASSAGE, APPLY AT THE

STAGE OFFICE, Second Street, between J and K,

—TO—

H. MONTFORT, Agent,
SACRAMENTO.

Holladay, in the beginning, fell heir to the daily Central Overland California & Pike's Peak Express, extending from the Missouri River as far as Salt Lake. This line, being the combination of a Salt Lake route that had been driven to the wall, a Denver route that had failed, and the amalgamated upshot of both on the road to ruin, might have offered him a splendid opportunity to demonstrate his capacity as stageman. Standards had been rather low on the Central route in the past. Only a modest expenditure of capital and energy might have been needed in order to present a happy contrast between the old management and the new. But it happened now that one did not have to look back in order to draw comparisons. The better part of the original Butterfield organization had been moved up from the South to fill the breach between Salt Lake and the Sierra Nevadas.

THIS old stagefaring firm had lost something in the recent shuffle, to include a few of its most capable officials; but it was no disjointed affair. It was an organization with set ideals of dependability and new opportunities for dispatch. It had brought rather formidable standards to the Central route—they were not the highest; but by them was the Eastern neighbor apt to be judged; and there was needed something more than capital and energy to lift the C. O. C. & P. P. E. from its demoralized state to a position of comparable merit. Whether Ben Holladay was "just the man" for the task may be a question; but it was a very dubious question during the four and a half years of his reign.

It would, perhaps, have been difficult to doubt this new proprietor's genius; but there were reasons, often called "excuses," which prevented him from making any vivid display of this quality along his overland lines. With no glittering exception to be noted in the year of sixty-three, the eastern section of the Great Overland kept losing the continuity. Generally, it gave poor service. Often, over extended periods, it gave no service at all. Holladay was blamed, of course. He was perhaps the most unpopular stage proprietor that ever lived. But it is very apparent that no one, beset as he was beset by the hostilities of Indians, could have begun. in the slightest, to satisfy the popular expectations.

Holladay, nevertheless, was not a Butterfield or a Birch. Staging, which chanced to become his business, was not and could not have been his profession. Inspired by a love for no calling but the amassing of a fortune, he was apt to tackle almost anything that promised him a fair fight, in the cool business sense, for gold. As an owner of more than a dozen large vessels in the Pacific trade, he was by nature as far from the sea and the ways of the sea as any yokel from his old home town of Weston, Missouri. As an owner of stage-coaches, he was naturally more adaptable. He was a good judge of stock; he knew the ways of the plains; he was practically fearless, and incidentally had once driven, or tried to drive, a stage. But if he was any improvement, in this particular sense, upon the inexperienced proprietors he had succeeded, then the Indian must be blamed for having denied him the chance to demonstrate.

Thus, in many respects, was Holladay handicapped from the start; and while Indians did present by far the greatest of all obstacles in his path, it is perhaps fortunate that his was a phase of only secondary moment in the conquest of the West by stage.

It was on March 2, 1861—about a week after the Butterfield route had been cut up by guerrilla warfare through Texas—that an act of Congress had been approved, calling for certainly the greatest of all American stage-coach undertakings thus far: daily service between St. Joseph and Placerville, contractors agreeing in good faith among themselves to maintain an average speed of seventeen days between the termini, and being bound by contract to a schedule rate of twenty days during eight months of the year and twenty-three through the remaining months. For this service, which included the carrying of all mails to and from California, the annual compensation was to be $1,000,000.

The new agreement was with the old company, the Overland Mail, which, upon shifting to a portion of the Central route, was to make its own arrangements with the firms already established in the other sections. The Mail Company was also privileged to arrange with shipping concerns for the transportation of heavy printed matter, and was to receive liberal allowance to cover the costs involved in moving up from the Southern route. All through the late spring and early summer long trains of Butterfield coaches, wagons, horses, and mules were seen plodding westward over New Mexico and Arizona, and northward through California, and eastward along the trail of the Pony Express as far as Salt Lake City. It was the breaking up of the old Southern institution whose Rainbow Trail was fading into the clouds of civil war.

There was some bitterness in the dusty tracks of these stage-coach processions. They were carrying away the old hopes for a Southern railroad; they were walking off with substantial prospects of populating the land, and they were leaving, in certain places, a wake of smoldering ruins where stage stations had once cheered the emigrant, where stage horns had sounded and flags had flown, and where the little communities had commenced to lift their heads. But there were certain superintendents of the Mail Company who had not forgotten the inroads upon their stock through Texas. They were burning what they could not carry away—stations and even stores. They were called "Black Republicans." They passed on, doggedly, with "Adios, and good riddance" flung at their sweating backs.

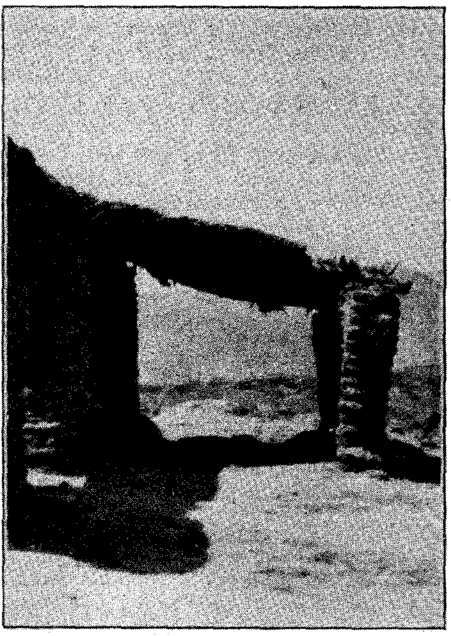
It was all in ugly contrast to the old feeling that John Butterfield had known in the days when he had been hailed as "admiral" and "chief," when even the hottest opponents of his course along the borders of Mexico had acknowledged him as master in the field. But unfortunately or otherwise, during these ugly times he was no longer the head of the Overland Mail Company. He had, some months since, while his line was operating at the height of its popularity, resigned his president's chair.

It seemed he had wished to compete with the Central Overland Pony Express by running a fast line of saddle stock over the Southern route, a route already well equipped for the undertaking. But other members of his firm had opposed him. Differences had arisen. Stagedom, at any rate, had lost him, and could have lost no finer spirit. Now William B. Dinsmore, of Adams & Company renown, one of the original contractors with Butterfield, was the nominal head of the firm. It was still the firm of "Butterfield & Company," but only by virtue of the original contract now amended and improved for the Central service. Re-established in northern territory, the organization was to be known simply as the Overland Mail, with Ford Cook, an efficiency expert rather than a stageman, acting as manager, and with Wells Fargo controlling. Personality, in short, had been buried somewhere on the banks of the Rio Grande. In more respects than one, there was to be nothing quite like the old original again.

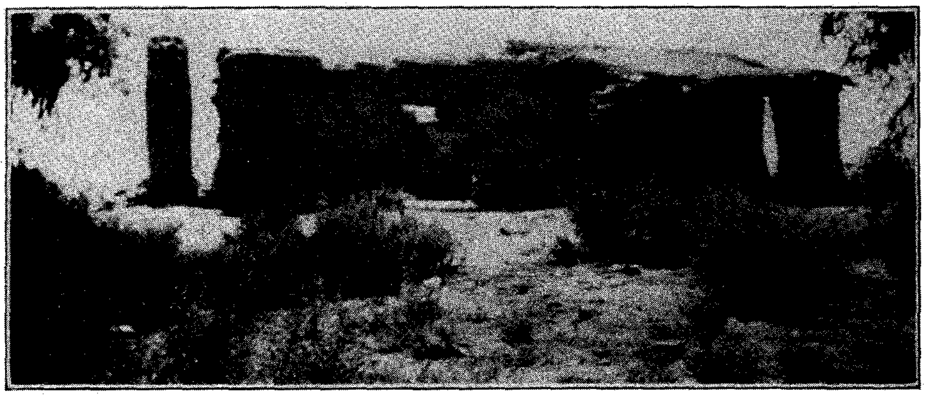
"The Los Angeles Star" later recalled "the vivid impressions we once had with regard to the certain prosperity, and the growing interest in this section of the country, when the first stage [of the Southern mail] entered Los Angeles, freighted with letters and passengers, crossing the Saharas of New Mexico and Arizona, and arriving here in twenty-one days from the Atlantic States. . . . The regularity with which the mail was carried, uninterrupted by the vicissitudes of climate or season, and the comparative comfort enjoyed by those who undertook the long and tedious journey, tends more to confirm the practicability of the great highway across the continent by the southern route than any exploring expedition, or topographical survey, previously made. But almost before we had time to contemplate the good things which the Government and Postmaster General had made possible for us . . . the mail was changed from the sunny South to the cold and inhospitable North. . . . But we must not despond. The government is beginning to see that the Southern route is absolutely necessary."

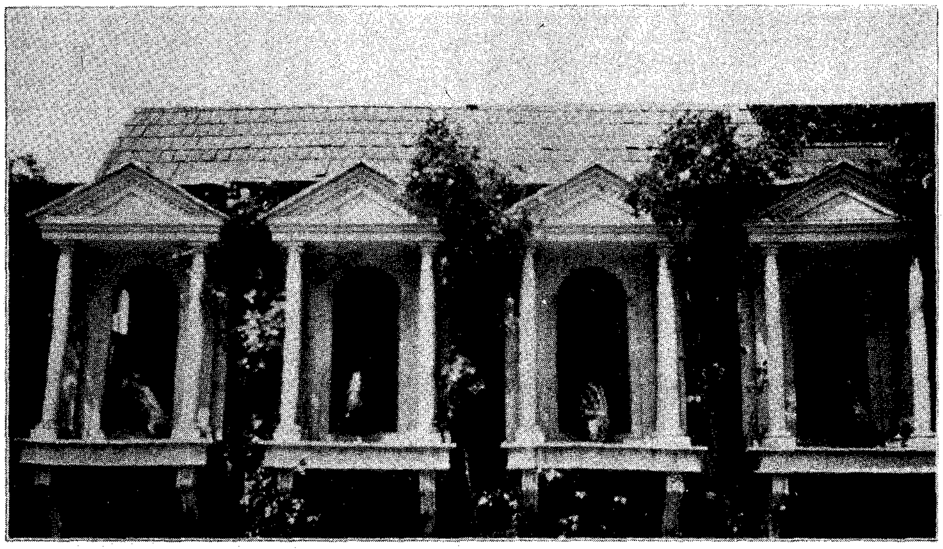
In fact, had the war permitted, a coach mail would certainly have been maintained on both routes. The Northern, for the sake of a more populated and promising region, for the sake of emigration and and general dispatch, did merit greater consideration in spite of its "cold and inhospitable" nature; but it was not implied even by the sectionalized North in the dawn of its new power, that the Southern route did not warrant Federal support. Indeed, while the Overland Mail was in the process of moving away, a contract was being renewed for the continuation and improvement of the line which Birch had put into operation in fifty-seven. The old "Jackass Mail" was to be dignified by the name of "Los Angeles, San Diego & San Antonio Mail." As such it might soon have been made to answer the demands of the country; but the service, having started, was suspended August 2, "due to Civil War."

THUS passed the last remnant of the Southern institution while the Central came into its own. In this advent there was nothing very spectacular. It was a matter of simple readjustment. The Pioneer Line, in perfect trim, flourishing under Louis McLane, answered the problem of the Sierra Nevada, and stood as the first link of the new trans-



Ruins of old Butterfield station of Vallecito on the Colorado Desert of California.





Stage team at home.

continental chain, extending from Placerville to Virginia and Carson, Nevada. The Overland Mail, intact as an organization, had only to occupy the road of the Pony Express from Carson as far as Salt Lake. The C. O. C. & P. P. E., already in action, with a short branch to Denver and connections at Fort Kearny from Omaha, completed the circuit to the eastern terminus of St. Joseph. All three lines, as a unit, were to commence the daily service on July 1. And they commenced accordingly with little ado. There was the feeling that this, the greatest of the world's staging enterprises, was, after all, nothing new. It had been existing for some years in all of its parts and potentialities, requiring only the crack of a congressional whip to make it go. It had been evolving since 1849—years of precious time.

But now, with "On to Richmond!" silenced by the advancing Confederate guns, there was the suggestion, at least, of one decisive Yankee victory in the clattering of Yankee wheels, rolling as ever out of Concord, rolling over all the Western empire. The West was conquered. July 2 of sixty-two was to clinch the conquest with Lincoln's name on the Railroad Bill. But there had been certain victories by such as Birch, such as Crandall, such as Butterfield, such as Chorpenning, Hockaday, Russell, and Majors; such too, of course, as "Old Charlie." Their work had been before the crisis. They had proved what a Concord stagecoach could do; they had built up new and very necessary standards, blazed the trails, demonstrated the feasibility of mountain passes, agitated action in Congress and established what firms were now intact, ready for the new staging era. There was the need now simply to carry on and expand with the growth of the land.

This task, however, was not as simple as it might have been; it was not made less difficult by the fact that it belonged to a less crucial phase of Western history. For no sooner had Congress authorized the new million-dollar mail than the War Department made it utterly impossible for the stages to give service worth much more than half its cost. Troops were needed elsewhere. Practically all protection was withdrawn from the plains. Overland stages were to square their own yards with Indians—Indians growing rapidly more tired of the white man's presence in their lands. It was the case, particularly, along that section of road which was soon to fall to Ben Holladay. He was to find himself running a series of Indian wars quite as often as others were, to be sure that he was operating a stage line.

A first-class fighter rather than a professional stageman may possibly have been what was needed at this bitter end of the route; for there were stagemen of high standing who did not envy its proprietors. Witness, for example, the trustees of the California Company, writing Frank Stevens in Washington, imploring him "for God's sake" and "as we love you, Frank," don't go into that game! Frank Stevens didn't; but Holladay did—a roughshod king destined for a little reign of terror.

Men of a more adventuresome cast, braver men, men better qualified to serve Ben Holladay in his long series of Indian campaigns, could scarcely have been found elsewhere. As Pony Expressmen or stagemen, or both, under Russell, Majors & Waddell, many had been "bullwhackers" on the route long before and had become familiar with every mile of it. They were plainsmen. They knew how to protect themselves and the property of their employers from hostilities of all kinds so long as any known resources were available. In the absence of adequate military patrols they were no poor substitutes for soldiers, and had been known to set out deliberately upon warpaths of their own to recover what the Indians had stolen.

When Cody was riding express (supposedly) in the upper Platte and Sweetwater country (modern Wyoming), establishing his record for endurance among pony riders, fighting off the Sioux and carrying on in the incredible manner so typical of the later celebrated "Buffalo Bill," such inroads were being made upon the stock of that division that the company was soon obliged to suspend operations. Colonel Cody's book in collaboration with Colonel Inman, "The Great Salt Lake Trail," tells something of what followed:

"WHILE we were thus all lying idle [September, 1860], a party was organized to go out and search for the stolen stock. This party was comprised of stage drivers, express riders, stocktenders, and ranchmen—forty of them all together—and they were well armed and well mounted. They were mostly men who had undergone all kinds of hardships and braved every danger, and they were ready and anxious to tackle any number of Indians. Wild Bill [Hickok], who had been driving stage on the road and had recently come down to our [Sweetwater] division, was elected captain of the company. It was supposed that the stolen stock had been taken to the head of the Powder River and vicinity, and the party, of which I was a member, started out for that section in high hopes of success.

"Twenty miles out from Sweetwater Bridge, at the head of Horse Creek, we found an Indian trail running north toward the Powder River, and we could see by the tracks that most of the horses had been recently shod and were undoubtedly our stolen stage-stock. Pushing rapidly forward, we followed this trail to Powder River; thence down this stream to within about forty miles of the spot where old Fort Reno now stands. Here the trail took a more westerly course along the foot of the mountains, leading eventually to Crazy Woman's Fork—a tributary of the Powder River. At this point we discovered that the party whom we were trailing had been joined by another band of Indians, and, judging from the fresh appearance of the trail, the united body could not have left this spot more than twenty-four hours before.

"Being aware that we were now in the heart of the hostile country and might at any moment find more Indians than we had lost, we advanced with more caution than usual and kept a sharp lookout. As we were approaching Clear Creek, another tributary of the Powder River, we discovered Indians on the opposite side of the creek, some three miles distant; at least we saw horses grazing, which was a sure sign that there were Indians there.

"The Indians, thinking themselves in comparative safety—never before having been followed so far into their own country by white men—had neglected to put out any scouts. They had no idea that there were any white men in that part of the country. We got the lay of their camp, and then held a council to consider and mature a plan for capturing it. We knew full well that the Indians would outnumber us at least three to one, and perhaps more. Upon the advice and suggestion of Wild Bill, it was finally decided that we should wait until it was nearly dark, and then, after creeping as close to them as possible, make a dash through their camp, open a general fire on them, and then stampede the horses.

"This plan, at the proper time, was very successfully executed. The dash upon the enemy was a complete surprise to them. They were so overcome with astonishment that they did not know what to make of it. We could not have astounded them any more had we dropped down into their camp from the clouds. They did not recover from the surprise of this sudden charge until after we had ridden pell-mell through their camp and got away with our own horses as well as theirs. We at once circled the horses around toward the south, and after getting them on the south side of Clear Creek, some twenty of our men—just as darkness was coming on—rode back and gave the Indians a few parting shots. We then took up our line of march for Sweetwater Bridge, where we arrived four days afterwards with all our own horses and about one hundred captured Indian ponies.

"The expedition had proved a grand success, and the event was celebrated in the usual manner—by a grand spree. The only store at Sweetwater Bridge did a rushing business for several days. The returned stock-hunters drank and gambled and fought. The Indian ponies, which had been distributed among the captors, passed from hand to hand at almost every deal of cards. . . . The boys became so elated as well as elevated over their success against the Indians that most were in favor of going back and cleaning out the whole Indian race."

This incident, like one other heretofore noted in these chronicles, chances to find no direct verification in the raw, original sources such as newspapers of the day, travelers' journals, etc.; but it typifies truly at least the cast of men later in Ben Holladay's employ. And considering the fact that during his time it became the intention of the Indians to "clean out" the whole white race, he could scarcely have asked for a personnel better equipped for the fray. Brave adventure and romance, the Wild West at its wildest, belong to his four and a half years' drive over the plains by stage. He did not operate an exemplary system, he did not run a line according to the finest standards of the West, but it is clear that things might have been worse.

HELL AND HIGH WATER

"INDIAN" barbarities, especially over the several approaches to Salt Lake City from the east, were frequently perpetrated by white men in war-paint, and more frequently, perhaps, by white men and Indians combined, difficult though it sometimes was to distinguish one breed of savage from the other. Atrocities by allied Indians and Mormons upon Gentile emigrant trains may be prominently identified with the middle fifties, most notable of all the outrages being the Mountain Meadow massacre of fifty-seven, when more than one hundred and twenty men, women, and children were slaughtered, and about $30,000 worth of plunder carried away.

But the religious fanaticism of Utah, though it appears to have countenanced such bloody practices in the past, did not generally extend to the depredations of the sixties. Yet the old savage methods of attack and plunder continued to appeal to certain outlaw elements at large throughout the country; with the assistance of Indians or otherwise, these predatory whites continued as a scourge to settlers, emigrant trains, and stage stations.

Some time before the advent of Ben Holladay, such was the hostile nature of certain regions along the eastern section of the Overland, that the God-fearing Alexander Majors himself does not seem to have objected when one of the most notorious killers was employed and placed in a position of almost absolute authority over one ravaged division of the C. O. C. & P. P. Express. He was Joseph A. Slade, variously called "Jack," "Alf," and "William," also "The Little Terror of the Plains" and later "The Bad Man from Bitter Creek."

Some men held that he carried twenty-two buckshot and several bullets buried in various parts of his calloused anatomy, others that he boasted twenty-eight slugs from two barrels of a shotgun only, and still others that they numbered but eleven. In any event, there was some added weight to his indomitable prestige, especially since he was known to have worn the ears of "the other fellow" on his watch chain. He seems to have had a strange penchant for ears, having once sent a small package of them, with his compliments attached or implied, to an Indian chief to suggest the fates of certain braves in need of reform. Slade was a reformer. And he was willing to risk hell's fires himself if only he could send others to heaven.

Nearly a year and a half before the deposition of Russell, Majors & Waddell by Big Ben Holladay, Slade commenced his great overland staging career as a division agent, with headquarters at the prominent station of Julesberg in the northeast corner of Colorado, where Lodge Pole Creek branches off from the South Platte River. Here, in a long, low cabin, whose cedar logs had been drawn by oxen over a distance of a hundred miles, he once offered to share his coffee with Mark Twain, who "politely declined."

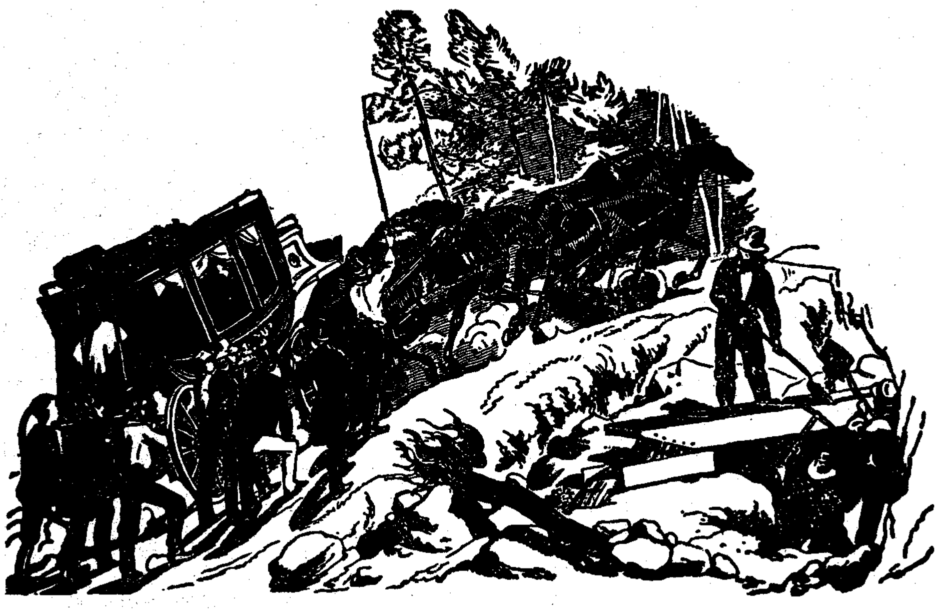
"I was afraid he had not killed anybody that morning, and might be in need of diversion," writes the humorist. "But still with firm politeness he insisted on filling my cup. . . . I thanked him and drank it, but it gave me no comfort, for I could not feel sure that he would not be sorry, presently, that he had given it away, and proceed to kill to distract his thoughts from the loss. But . . . we left him with only twenty-six dead people to account for. . . . I had pleasantly escaped being No. 27."

Of course, Mark Twain at that time was only Sam Clemens, and hardly worth killing in so far as Slade could have been aware; but toward certain others who had chanced to cross his bloody path the Little Terror had realized his duty. He had fulfilled his commission beyond the greatest expectations of his employers. Many men as honest as Clemens himself, not to mention women and children, had no doubt suffered the consequences; yet many villains had done likewise, and it was, in all, "for the general good." Drastic measures were very necessary in this land.

THE OUTLAWS had formerly been in close cooperation with certain station employees. Thefts of stock and stores had made serious inroads on the company's budget. It was in the fall of sixty, while Russell, Majors & Waddell were trying vainly to retrench, being burdened not only by the costly Pony Express but by a heavy competition in the business of staging as well. E. S. Alvord from Cali-

Concord stage wagon. Genuine Abbot, Downing "mud-wagon," once operated by Flint, Bixby and Company on the California coast line.

Photo Courtesy Sarah Bixby Smith



The well-known line of "Foot and Walker." Taken from *Pen-Knife Sketches,* by Alonzo Delano (Sacramento, 1853).

fornia, late general superintendent of the Butterfield line, had secured a mail contract over a route between Fort Kearny and Denver, and was running "The Western Stage Company" all the way from Omaha to the Pikes Peak mines. The C. O. C. & P. P. E. had been obliged, therefore, to cut rates in half. It seemed trying enough to be harassed in his manner, without having to suffer other serious losses at the hands even of employees of the firm.

Ben Ficklin, general superintendent under Russell, however, had found some one who appeared to have the faculty of shooting straight from both barrels of the expression. This gentleman—for he did have the manner and appearance—had by that time killed only about a half-dozen men, including Indians, but if he could kill about a half dozen more, besides Indians, perhaps matters would be adjusted. So it was one day that Slade, as a division agent, walked quietly into Julesberg—a settlement whose station, warehouse, blacksmith shop and store, were conveniently situated near a cemetery known as Boots Hill. It was a graveyard that boasted exactly one pair of boots to every grave; and now, upon the arrival of this new agent, its chance to uphold its old reputation through a period of unbridled expansion was more than passing fair. Slade proceeded to kill six scoundrels purely as a matter of introduction. And he was by no means certain that he would not have to kill more before his conscience would let him rest.

The name of Jules Bené—a notorious Frenchman suspected of being in collusion with stock-rustlers—may have been among those on his list; but it is also likely that the name of Slade was likewise on the list of Jules. There was enmity between them from the start; for it appears that the services of Jules as station-master had been dispensed with in order to make room for the killer; and that the killer had not hesitated to feed the coals of jealousy by hiring an assistant whom the Frenchman had formerly discharged. Evidently Slade was attempting to start a quarrel, believing that his pistol would end it. He became insulting, and is said to have charged the Frenchman with inhuman cruelties toward some rider of the Pony Express. The most likely sources differ somewhat in the details; but Slade, off his guard in the presence of Jules once too often, fell before the sudden discharge of a shotgun, and managed only to shoot twice in return before both he and his assailant were carried away to the hospital, narrowly escaping Boots Hill. That ended the first act.

The next took place about a year later. Jules was in hiding; but the other protagonist had posted a reward for his capture dead or alive. Slade was no authorized agent of the law; but his authority as murderer-in-chief was undisputed. He had wrought such order out of chaos on his division that, upon recovering from his wounds, he had been commissioned to direct his energy toward another hotbed of thieves—the Rocky Ridge road above Julesberg on the upper Platte. Here not only had he added many new notches to his gun but had actually sentenced three victims to hang, and had properly hanged them, one being a rider of the Pony Express. All the while, however, he had been waiting most anxiously for Jules.

It was in September of sixty-one when the Frenchman, painfully wounded by captors, was brought to justice—such justice as Slade could conceive. Bound hand and foot, thrown into a corral, he was left to the mercy of the court—such a court as Slade might be expected to constitute. The trial began with a preliminary shooting, a pistol pressed against the defendant's cheek and fired. Then the court adjourned for the night. On the following morning the defendant was alive, but mercifully unable to suffer more from the taunting and gloating of his captor. Slade killed him, cut off his ears, and went about his business.

Ears being no safer than scalps in the bloody realms of this reign, still the little boss of Rocky Ridge had also his lighter moments. "'Gentlemen,' said Slade, drawing, 'it's a good twenty-yard shot—I'll clip the third button on his coat!' Which he did. The bystanders all admired it. And they all attended the funeral, too."

SOME LEGENDS were bound to flourish around such a figure as Slade; but this button episode, as related with some credulity by Mark Twain and others, has its convincing qualities. Slade was a "dead shot." Probably he was a "lucky shot" too. And it did happen to be the custom for everyone, including the killer, to attend the funeral of the person killed. Certain ideals of decency had to be upheld—except, of course, by Slade. He could do about as he pleased. He had done about as he pleased nearly all his life.

As a fugitive from probably his first murder (in Illinois), he committed a second during flight. An altercation with a wagon driver of the west-bound emigrant train had prompted it; but it appears that the driver had been first to draw. He had not, however, fired. In fact Slade, in his quiet manner, had persuaded the other that this little quarrel might be settled more becomingly with fists. One, two, three—they would both drop their pistols to the ground and sail in like good fellows.

One, two, three! The driver fell, drilled through by a bullet from the pistol of a laughing Slade.

Then came the day when, with a score of such murders behind him, he had perhaps a score more bullets with the name of a victim on each of them, and a few extras for women and babies as their cases might chance to arise. An unfavorable comment with regard to the torturing of Jules led Slade straightway to the offender, whom he found in a store tending bar. Slade asked for whisky. The man turned to get it, and was at that instant "deader than any man that ever lived." And no sooner had the widow started off in flight, than Slade had shot her and the child in her arms. Then he proceeded to murder three or four Indians on the place before leaving to call it a day.

He went unhanged until 1865, after having left the stage company and identified himself with road-agents; but he had served Ben Holladay for several years in the interim, and been promoted during that time to the position of division superintendent.

"Best superintendent on the route," William Cody believed—having driven stage under Slade, Cody must have known.

"No one on the line was ever so useful," comes the comment from Frank A. Root, a messenger in the same service, and the very best of authorities.

"We need a dozen Slades on the route," writes a newspaper correspondent from Salt Lake, who had found reason very often to complain of the eastern mail.

Nor do these pronouncements come from pens that have made any attempt to refute or depreciate the many stories of Slade's exploits, or to justify his acts of inhuman cruelty, cowardice, and murder in any respect whatever. With only a possible exception in the correspondent's case, they are the testimonials from pens that have told Slade's story in more detail than there is room for here. Yet Slade, it would seem, was the "best superintendent on the route," and "no one on the line was more useful," and there were needed a dozen more!

"God help us!" was the traveler's thought. For passengers crossing the plains by stage must have heard very similar comments in Slade's behalf. In a number of cases, at least, upon reaching their destination, they told the newspapers all about it, and pointed to Slade, very naturally, as an *example* of the kind of men in demand on the Holladay line!

Passengers were thus often unjust. There were a number of excellent stagemen as agents and superintendents, and innumerable splendid whips, on the eastern section. But the service there *was* poor. No matter how the delinquencies could be accounted for, this was an undoubted fact; and passengers, even more than those who suffered through the loss or detention of mail, were well qualified to testify on this score.

They could not help but observe, and they seldom failed to comment upon, the striking change of conditions that appeared as they left stages of one management at Salt Lake to proceed westward in the care of another. There was noticed at once an improvement in all matters of comfort, speed, system, and general good manners; and the improvement became more apparent with the westward progression—as the influence of the roughshod school of the old frontiers was left farther and farther behind, and that of the new El Dorado was overtaken. In fact, one was apt to wonder, Slade being an example of "the best," if more blooded stock in stagemen, and less bloody stock in gunmen, might not have bettered things somewhat at the eastern end. Perhaps not noticeably. But certainly the assumption was justified by certain travelers who did not chance upon some of the overshadowing obstacles met by Ben Holladay.

DURING the hard winter of sixty-two a creditor less bold than Holladay might have slept through nightmares contemplating a foreclosure on the stage line between Salt Lake and the Missouri River. C. O. C. & P. P. E. was then being translated as "Clean Outa Cash & Past Paying Expenses," with suggestive reasons for it all along the route. But it was otherwise swamped. Much of it was literally under water, as were many other things over all the land.

The Gila and Colorado River country being submerged over a distance of one hundred miles or more, this was one winter that would have paralyzed even the late Butterfield line. The rivers Carson and Humboldt of Nevada and the deserts in their immediate vicinity, glittering now as a single lake, this was one winter that did paralyze the worthy descendant of the Butterfield line as it ranged between the Mormon city and the Sierras. The Great Basin appeared to be filling. Elsewhere in the nation cabins that had stood since the dawn of the nineteenth century, trees of two centuries' growth, were swept away.

"First mail from the East for six days." "No mail from the West for several days." "This evening aspires to put through the first mail in the last ten days." "Bromley, Division Agent [just east of Salt Lake], a fellow hard to beat out of doors—was three days traveling ten miles."

When the telegraph wires were working, or when a stage-coach managed to pull through, such were the reports from Salt Lake City from January until May of sixty-two. Meanwhile mail matter had also been accumulating to swamp the line; and to add to the chaos of loose letters and bags piled up here and there from one end of the route to the other, the contractors had as yet been unable to contract, as had been their privilege to do, with the shipping interests to carry the bulky articles. Public documents had sometimes served as road-beds for stage-coach wheels! But newspapers and letters were choking all the stations and storerooms; and it was not until the floods were practically over that arrangements could be made with the steamship men to relieve the congestion. So delinquent was the service on the whole that, despite the protests of the Postmaster-General, payment to the contractors was being withheld pending an investigation—some proof, perhaps, that there had been an extraordinary flood!

Dinsmore's (Western) section of the line, with the financial support of Wells Fargo, was able to withstand the delay. The Pioneer line was practically self-supporting. But the C. O. C. & P. P. E. was in very unhappy circumstances. It was an unfortunate goose with a golden egg on which Holladay held a first mortgage. And upon it as it lay, half under water, "clean out of cash," and with all possibilities of paying expenses held up by the Government, Holladay pounced. On March 2 he was the formal purchaser. Bela M. Hughes of Missouri, an able attorney who had succeeded William Russell some months before as president of the line, was retained along with the general personnel. But Holladay assumed full command and became the sole master of the monstrous mess.

THOSE who had once cheered the Pony Express of the late Russell, Majors & Waddell now hailed the advent of Holladay as a great salvation. Because Ben was a great man. Everybody knew that. On the plains he was "one of the boys." And if, they said, he would only do half of what was expected of him, the daily mail would rise and flourish. It was the general feeling; for Holladay was known nearly as well in Utah and California as he was in Missouri, from whose frontiers he had sprung. Early in the fifties he had bought stores in the East, trekked them to Salt Lake, traded them for stock, driven the stock to California, and sold out at a handsome profit. Incidental to his freighting and stock-driving business, he had also been affiliated with one of the overland mail-carriers (W. L. Blanchard) in fifty-three. In short, he had bee hoeing a long road through the West, an was worthy, in the eyes of the West, t drive stages over it—especially since i was believed that he was not the type o man to rest on his laurels.

He recognized the whole system, adding new stock and vehicles, but continuing for the time with the old name o "C. O. C. & P. P. Express." Great result were anticipated. But they failed to materialize. While the Overland Mail Lin was emerging from the floods with al the new life of mid-spring, the easter neighbor was commencing to offer its excuses. Indians!

And there were Indians; but the worl was by now too impatient and too tire to listen. Travelers, moreover, were coming in with reports that made India stories seem rather tame. It was we known that heaps of mail had been accumulating all along the route, and tha a great deal of energetic work would b needed to put it all through; but no (June) with the warehouse at Julesber "packed full," and all stations along th upper Platte still hopelessly congested, i was reported that nearly all the mail between the Sweetwater Bridge and For Bridger had been destroyed.

"At Sweetwater, thirty-nine bags o United States locked mail, and seve sacks of Wells Fargo & Company expres matter . . . were rifled of their conten At Ice Springs, two bags of mail wer cut open, and the station was knee-dee with loose and unopened letters."

Such vandalism could scarcely be attributed to Indians. Informants along th route had convinced one D. W. Pense an other travelers that "depredations sai to have been perpetrated by Indians wer perpetrated by employees of the compan under the direction of different agents.' Slade being active as usual at this time such a charge did not seem wholly extravagant. Ordered to "clean up" an mess, Slade would be apt to "clean" b one means or another. Now, perhaps, instead of making forfeitures for breache of contract, the contractor would attemp to collect indemnities from the Government for damages by Indians!

It was no wonder now that the long-suffering press had suddenly turne against Ben Holladay and begun t thunder its indignation. Believe in suc atrocities? It had to. Witness Slade, bes superintendent on the route, most usef man. Holladay, of course, denied th charge; and subsequent investigation proved nothing against him. Nor, howeve capable of making money, was Hollada apt to have employed such ruthless methods. Nevertheless, his original popularit was gone at a time when he needed i most. Large bands of Indans, with white mixed in, were on the rampage all alon the Sweetwater, killing and looting, adding havoc to chaos. Troops alone coul have brought any order, but the troop were gone.—*To be concluded next issue.*

(Parts I and II of *Six Horses* are avai able at 75¢ each from Circulation Department, P. O. Box 3338, Austin, Texa 78764.)

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